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'Iran has 8 cruise missiles to guard Gulf'

LONDON (AP) — Iran has purchased eight supersonic, sea-skimming cruise missiles from Ukraine to control the vital tanker route into the Gulf, the Observer newspaper reported. The purchase of the Sunburst missiles was characterised as being part of an aggressive programme by Iran to regain military strength lost in its 1980-88 war with Iraq and become the region's superpower. Ukraine's parliament speaker, Ivan Plyushch, is visiting Tehran this week. Officials have said the two countries are discussing cooperation in various fields, including oil and energy, but there have been no reports from Iran concerning military purchases. A Ukrainian-made Sunburst missile could hit a vessel passing through the Strait of Hormuz about 17 seconds after it is launched in Iran, according to the Observer. In addition to the eight missiles, Iran bought up to 50 MiG-29 and other combat aircraft, more than 200 T-72M1 tanks and the S-300 air defence system which the Russians claim is better than the U.S. Patriot system used in the Gulf war, the paper said. The size and range of Iran's arms buying has caused concern among the smaller Gulf states and their Western allies.

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Sheikh Isa congratulates King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday received a cable from Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, the emir of Bahrain, congratulating him on the 40th anniversary of his assumption of his constitutional powers. Sheikh Isa wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

UAE executes 4

ABU DHABI (AP) — Four convicted murderers were executed Wednesday in a rare use of capital punishment by this federation of emirates. The executions were announced by the Interior Ministry. It did not specify the method used. Previous executions have been by firing squad. One of those executed, Otman Lital Toya of India, was convicted in 1989 of killing Mubarak Khasi Al Nasiri in the city of Al Ain. Ibrahim Ahmad Abdullah Ahmad and Abdullah Mohammad Al Khasomi, UAE nationals, were executed for killing Jawada Zagri Ben Nariz Ali after kidnapping her along with three of her relatives. The date of the crime was not given. Rashid Salim Saeed Al Falahi, a UAE national, was executed for killing Hamdan Sagr Al Falahi last year.

Beirut daily shut

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Lebanese government closed the opposition daily Al Safir for seven days starting Wednesday for publishing the alleged text of an Israeli plan for a possible withdrawal from Lebanon. The state prosecutor charged that the daily had published "for no legal reasons a document which, in the interest of the state, should have remained secret," a spokesman for Al Safir said quoting the official notice of closure. Foreign Minister Fares Boutros told reporters the published document was an "incorrect translation" of the original and a fake.

Mubarak ratifies death sentences

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has ratified death sentences for seven Muslim militants convicted of attacking foreign tourists and plotting to overthrow the government, officials said Wednesday. They said Mr. Mubarak endorsed the verdicts on May 8. No date has been set for the executions to be carried out.

UAE to normalise ties with Yemen

SANAA (AP) — The United Arab Emirates moved Wednesday to patch up relations with Yemen, disrupted when Yemenis supported Iraq during the Gulf crisis. The official news agency SABA said the call came in a message from UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan delivered to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The message "affirmed the necessity of turning the page on the past and looked forward to forgiveness, mercy and rapprochement among brothers whose solidarity was unavoidable in line with their destiny and history," the agency said. The message expressed a desire to strengthen ties in various fields that serve mutual interests of the two people, the agency said.

Libya for Islamic boycott of Britain

TUNIS (R) — Libya called Wednesday for an Islamic boycott of Britain following a meeting between Prime Minister John Major and author Salman Rushdie. "Where are those who claim to be defenders of Islam?" the religious affairs editor of the official Libyan news agency JANA wrote in a commentary. "Why do they not protest and boycott Britain because its government receives at the highest level, such as individual who assails Islam, Muslims and the Prophet Muhammad?" See related story on page 2.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks struggle forward

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Middle East peace talks are struggling forward, disrupted by the Palestinians' anger at what they say are broken Israeli promises and threatened by a coalition crisis in Israel. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators Tuesday discussed a Palestinian draft statement of principles on self-rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip despite a threat from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to delay the document as a precondition.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi said afterwards the two sides were still far apart. "With regard to jurisdiction over territory, the issue of legislation, the issue of Jerusalem, on these there is no agreement," he told reporters. "These are the main obstacles in the road." He said agreement on a declaration of principles with Israel by the end of the talks' ninth round Thursday was unlikely. "I do not believe a charter of principles (on Palestinian autonomy) is a possibility before the end of this round," Dr. Abdul Shafi told reporters after a meeting of the two delegations at the State Department.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher meanwhile was more enthusiastic about the prospects for progress. "There will be very considerable progress to report" by the end of this round of talks, Mr. Christopher said, adding that he was encouraged by the Israeli-Palestinian discussions because they were addressing substantive issues. "That's a very good sign, very hopeful to me," he told reporters. "Whenever you have four different talks you are bound to have

greater speed on one track than on another. But overall I think it has been a very good round," the secretary said. "I expect there will be very considerable progress to report, including on the Palestinian track. But we really won't know that until Friday comes along," Christopher said. The secretary noted that there will be a recess in this round of talks starting May 14, when the parties return to the region for consultations. Asked about setbacks on the Israeli-Palestinian track, Mr. Christopher said that "inevitably there are ups and downs in the situation. But the main thing about the Palestinian track that is notable is that they are talking substantive issues."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Wednesday Israel would consider further gestures to Palestinians to help the peace talks. "Despite the Arabs' gloomy assessment of the talks, Mr. Peres said he hoped Israel would be able to reach a joint declaration of an agenda with the Palestinians before the current round of negotiations ends Thursday. "We shall look very carefully to any other requests of the Palestinians to facilitate their negotiations," Mr. Peres told foreign correspondents. "We are not blind, and we are not indifferent to the difficulties they are facing," Mr. Peres said. Mr. Peres, in a news conference with the foreign press association in Israel, also disclosed that the Clinton administration

was attempting to mediate in the talks under way in Washington. He declined to give specifics of what he termed "a long list of differences" between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, saying: "While the Americans are now trying to bridge over, I wouldn't like to go into the differences." Mr. Peres praised the current round as "dealing for the first time with substance and not just procedures." Each side has tabled a draft proposal of its goals for the talks, which began in Madrid, Spain, in October 1991. "The Palestinians are looking for a map that autonomy will control," Mr. Peres said. "We have suggested to the Palestinians a calendar, not a map, which says that under the present climate we cannot agree on the frontiers... so

let's travel from the present climate to a new climate which will make it possible for them and for us to mark permanent frontiers." He said he expected the 10th round to convene early in June. On talks with Lebanon, Mr. Peres said that the Israeli delegation was disappointed with Lebanon's latest proposals but gave no details. Mr. Peres urged the Syrian delegation to be more specific on how it sees peace evolving with Israel. "Just to have embassies, as Israeli embassy in Syria and eventually a Syrian embassy in Israel, is really part and parcel of a real peace," Mr. Peres said.

(Continued on page 10)

Israelis kill two in occupied Gaza

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinians and wounded 33 in an explosion of violence Wednesday which left two soldiers wounded. The fighting broke out over the killings of six members of the fundamentalist Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), by Israeli troops as they tried to flee to Egypt, Palestinian sources said. Mohammad Salem Abu Tahma, 13, was shot in the stomach when soldiers opened fire at stone-throwing demonstrators in the Gaza Strip's Rafah refugee camp, Palestinian sources said. He died in hospital.

At the Deir Al Balah camp in the Strip, soldiers posted on a rooftop near a market opened fire on stone-throwers, hitting Fuad Tinsari in the mouth and killing him instantly. The 18-year-old had been wounded three other times in previous clashes with the Israelis. Troops shot and wounded 33 other Palestinians in the Strip, the sources added.



A Palestinian woman gestures as an Israeli soldier looks at Palestinian landowner Juman Rawehli lying on the ground after being beaten up by Jewish settlers in occupied Jerusalem (AFP photo)

Old and new woes aside, Jordan ponders path to future

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AT ONE fell swoop last week, a decision by an erstwhile ally wiped out nearly three per cent of Jordan's gross domestic product (GDP), adding to the woes of a people already facing difficult economic and political problems. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's decision to withdraw 25-dinar premium-priced old banknotes from circulation and close his country's borders with the outside world, in a bid to shore up the value of the Iraqi dinar, did not only cost Jordanians some \$100 million in hoarded currency. It also interrupted badly needed oil supplies and showed how vulnerable this country remains to external political factors and economic pressure. The adversarial Iraqi move, which ironically drew two diametrically opposed reactions

from the press and the public, came on top of an anguished debate over the need to introduce a new sales tax, which, in public eyes at least, was certain to raise commodity prices for consumers but unlikely to produce added income for the government or the Kingdom as a whole. Taking into consideration the financial tragedy that befell tens of thousands of Jordanians as a result of the cancellation of the "Swiss" Iraqi banknotes, the government seems to have had no alternative but to freeze all moves towards imposing the new tax, which was initially prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its 1989 economic adjustment programme for Jordan. It remains to be seen whether this decision, which

has not been officially announced due most probably to internal divisions over it within the government, will hinder Jordan's efforts to reschedule international debts, estimated at \$500 million, due this summer. Western diplomats and economists in Amman doubt that that will be the case, since the IMF is sympathetic to Jordan and might be amenable to some kind of a formula to clear the way for the Kingdom's debt-rescheduling talks. But it is becoming less unclear for Jordanians that in the continued absence of Arab reconciliation (often a code name for restoration of ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries) and breakthrough in the peace process with Israel, the country will continue to be hard pressed on both the economic and political fronts.

(Continued on page 10)

Rabin seeks wider cabinet

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin seeks to enlarge his ruling coalition to stamp out the threat to his government from infighting between its secular and religious wings, officials said Wednesday. Mr. Rabin, who on Tuesday saved the government from imminent collapse and secured a one-week reprieve, has told aides he wanted to avoid a prolonged political crisis "at all costs." He has opened a dialogue with the Jewish ultra-orthodox United Torah Party, which has four seats in parliament, officials said. Mr. Dori of the Shas religious party tendered his resignation Sunday demanding that the leader of the Meretz party and secular champion be shifted from education following her outspoken comments on the Jewish religion. Mr. Rabin won a week's respite just minutes before Mr. Dori's resignation was due to take

effect and leave the coalition without a majority in parliament, the Knesset. Shas has six MPs in the 120-seat Knesset. Meretz has 12 seats and the premier's Labour Party 44, five short of a majority without Shas. But the government also has the backing of five Arab-Israeli and Communist MPs. Rabbi Abraham Shapira, a Torah MP, confirmed a dialogue was underway with the government. But the party's spiritual guide, Rabbi Eliezer Shach, ruled out joining the coalition. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, meanwhile, stressed that the government's priority was the Middle East peace process and not to combat a prolonged political crisis. "We must enlarge the ruling coalition because the government cannot at the same time fight both on the domestic and diplomatic fronts," he said.

Mubarak calls for Arab reconciliation

BAHRAIN (AP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak urged Arabs Wednesday to find a way to heal the rift caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Mr. Mubarak also urged perseverance in Middle East negotiations and said he hoped an Arab-Israeli peace settlement would be reached before the end of the year. Iran, meanwhile, accused the Egyptian president of trying to divert attention from "the real danger," Israel, by demonising Iraq. Iran's news agency, monitored in Cyprus reported that a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Tehran said Mr. Mubarak was involved in a conspiracy with Israel, which in exchange would cooperate in restoring internal stability to Egypt.

Mr. Mubarak spoke to the official Gulf News Agency following an official round of talks with the emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, before winding up a two-day visit within a tour of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The GCC comprises Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. The agency said that asked about the current situation in the Arab World and restoring Arab solidarity, the Egyptian president "expressed his desire to find a means of restoring Arab solidarity and cooperation among Arab countries in the interest of the Arab region."

The choices for electoral reform

THE DEBATE on whether Jordan needs electoral reform has pointed to many "undemocratic" and even "unconstitutional" provisions in the current controversial elections law, but produced little more than vague ideas on how to redress them. In the first of a series of articles on the issue, Ayman Al Safadi looks at the distribution of seats and constituencies under the current law and assesses the impact of change on them. POLITICAL parties, activists, members of parliament and others have been attempting to address legal technicalities for the mechanisms of change in the 1989 elections law in the event the government asks for it. Solid proposals for a new election law that would not disturb the balance in Jordan's complicated socio-political environment have yet to be made, however. The one thing on which the majority of political parties agree is that the government should not unilaterally change the law through temporary legislation, which is not endorsed by Parliament. Such a step, they argue, would be undemocratic or un-

constitutional due to the lack of extraordinary circumstances that would give the government the right to issue provisional law without calling an extraordinary session of Parliament, whose mandate runs till November. Changing the election law through temporary legislation "would be unconstitutional," prominent lawyer Ibrahim Bakr argued recently, expressing a view shared by the majority of members of the House and political parties. His Majesty King Hussein said earlier this month that changes to the law are still under consideration, while the only thing government sources would confirm is that the

Cabinet of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker will not address any issues pertaining to the elections due to the presence of a large interest group, minister deputies, in it. Neither the King nor members of Cabinet have publicly proposed a mechanism for initiating the change if it is to be introduced. A mechanism that seems to be winning favour with the majority of parties concerned, however, is the formation of a popular committee in which representatives of all political trends in the country are included and entrusted with the process. "The elections law is a basic law," says former Prime Minister Taber Al Masri. "Changing it should be part of a process that enjoys wide support by the public" and the various arms of the state. But the apparent agreement on the mechanism for changing

(Continued on page 10)

Egypt-Sudan rift worsens

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's relations with Sudan took another dip Wednesday when Cairo airport authorities refused entry of two Sudanese diplomats coming from Pakistan. The diplomats, Mahmoud Muhammad Abdul Ghani and Al Sadeq Abdul Aziz Abdullah, left Cairo for the Sudanese capital Khartoum on a Sudanese airliner after waiting at the airport for 15 hours. There was no explanation for the Egyptian move but state-owned newspapers reported at the weekend that around 230 Muslim extremists expelled from Khartoum have been received in Khartoum. Sudan denied the report, saying it was aiming at escalating tension between the two countries further. President Hosni Mubarak has accused the Muslim fundamentalist government of Sudan of training and financing Muslim extremists with the help of Iran. He says

that once trained, extremists are sent to Egypt and other Arab states on missions aimed at overthrowing their government. Hundreds of militants who fought against former Soviet Union in Afghanistan have moved to Pakistan, where Egypt says extremists attacks are being plotted. Pakistan's government has been rounding up and expelling scores of suspected radicals. Amid growing tension between the two countries over a border dispute, a Sudanese official said Tuesday his country would support the establishment of an Islamic state in Egypt. Ghazi Salahuddin, presidential state minister, told a popular meeting in Khartoum that the next quarrel with Egypt will not be over territory but morality. "The next battle will be between virtue and vice and will go beyond the question of Halab," he said.

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Russia uses veto to kill Cyprus draft

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Russia stunned the Security Council Tuesday by casting its first veto since 1984 to kill a British resolution aimed at reforming the financing of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

All 14 other council members voted for the draft, calling for the costs of the 1,500-member force to be divided among all U.N. members, instead of relying on voluntary donations.

UNFICYP, one of the longest-running U.N. peacekeeping operations, has been stationed on the Mediterranean island since 1964 to help keep peace between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

It is the only U.N. force to rely on voluntary contributions, provided mainly by the countries which furnish the troops. As a result, it has an accumulated deficit of some \$200 million.

Britain, which, together with Austria and Canada, has a large contingent serving with UNFICYP, provides much of the force's logistics and estimates its annual contribution at close to \$50 million.

If future costs were apportioned among all U.N. members Britain's share would amount to just over \$1 million.

Russia, in dire economic straits, seeks to avoid additional financial burdens, even though its share of the Cyprus operation would amount to less than \$2 million a year.

Moscow's decision to unseat its 15th veto over a matter of relatively minor importance was greeted with disbelief by many diplomats.

They saw it as the use of a diplomatic cannon, reminiscent of the cold war era, to bag a rabbit of a resolution.

Russian U.N. envoy Yuli Vorontsov, who is also president of the council this month, said: "We would not like to create a precedent of full rejection in U.N. practice of the principle of voluntary financing of peacekeeping operations."

Russia's position was "dictated solely by practical considerations" relating to future U.N. peacekeeping, he said.

As an inducement to Russia to agree to the reform, Cyprus and Greece had offered to contribute a total of \$25 million of the anticipated \$47 million annual cost of the force.

Cyprus is anxious to retain UNFICYP, in view of the presence of some 30,000 Turkish troops in the north of the island, and had said it would donate \$18.5 million a year, while Greece would provide \$6.5 million.

This would have left only about \$22 million annually to be divided among the rest of the U.N.'s 181 members. But it still failed to persuade Moscow.

Britain's Sir David Hannay expressed regret at Russia's decision "because it puts in jeopardy the whole of the U.N. peacekeeping operation in Cyprus" as well as the efforts of Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to end the division of the island.

He called Russia's action "quite disproportionate, given the extremely modest financial implications" for Moscow, and urged it to reconsider.

Because of the promised payments by Cyprus and Greece, voluntary contributions would still account for more than 50 per cent of UNFICYP's financing, he noted.

American Ambassador Madeleine Albright also regretted Russia's veto but said the United States understood and shared some of its concerns over the broader question of peacekeeping financing.

"The inequalities in the existing peacekeeping assessment scale are beginning to call into question our ability to carry out the U.N.'s work," she said, alluding to major operations in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Cambodia.

"We are coming to the day when countries in need will dial the global '911' and get a busy signal," Ms. Albright said, referring to the "911" emergency phone number.

The Soviet Union, whose Security Council seat was taken over by Russia in December 1991, last used its veto in February 1984 to defeat a resolution concerning Lebanon.

The last veto by any of the council's five permanent members — Russia, France, the United States, Britain and China — was cast by the United States in May 1990 against a draft dealing with the Israeli-occupied territories. That was the 69th U.S. veto since the founding of the United Nations.

UNFICYP has been steadily eroded over the past year as troop-contributing countries, which absorb about 70 per cent of the costs, have withdrawn some or all of their troops.

They have grown disenchanted at the financial burden and a lack of progress after years of negotiations aimed at reunifying the divided island under a federal system.

Another round of talks between President Glafcos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash is due to begin at U.N. headquarters on May 24.

Since voluntary contributions fail to cover even the 30 per cent of costs to be borne by the United Nations, UNFICYP has a deficit of some \$200 million.

Conditions of Palestinians worsen

AMMAN (Petra) — The closure of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, now in its second month, has deprived Palestinian workers of their livelihoods and caused severe harm to the Palestinian economy, according to a monthly report by the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs.

The closure has raised the rate of unemployment among Palestinians to about 55 per cent; as 120,000 workers, who used to work in Israel, face a ban on entry to occupied Jerusalem or Israel, said the report issued Wednesday.

The closure of the territories, it said, has caused a serious deterioration in the health conditions of the Arab people who are banned from entering occupied Jerusalem to receive treatment.

The report said that patients calling at the Makassed Hospital in Jerusalem had dropped by 60 per cent and doctors and nurses who

used to come to that hospital from the West Bank are not working there any more.

While the closure continues, Israel's settlement building programme is also continuing, the report said.

Nearly 3.1 million dunams of Arab-owned land in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been confiscated and the Israelis have built on them 206 Jewish settlements, the report said.

Describing the closure as a flagrant violation of human rights, the report quoted officials from human rights organisations as saying that the "collective punishment being practised on the two million Palestinians are bound to cause untold damage to their social and economic life and is detrimental to their freedom and human rights."

The report said that in April 121 citizens from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were tried by Israeli military courts and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

At least 32 Palestinians have reportedly died in Israeli jails since the start of the intifada in 1987, and 14 were said to have died during interrogation and torture sessions, the report added.

Among the thousands of detainees, said the report, 350 young men are in bad need of medical attention.

In the past month, 19 Palestinians were killed, raising to 1,428 the total number of Palestinians killed by the Israelis since the beginning of the intifada, the report said.

The report said that Israel's repressive practices against Palestinian education institutions continue unabated and many students from the occupied territories have been deprived of the chance of obtaining education at schools in occupied Jerusalem due to the ban on Arab people's entry into the Holy City.

New fighting front opens in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — A new war front has been opened in Kabul when scores of artillery shells were exchanged by three duelling factions in yet another violation of a two-month-old ceasefire agreement.

Fighting centred around Darulaman Palace at the end of a three-kilometre long avenue linking central Kabul with its southern-most outskirts.

For five hours on Tuesday tank and rocket shells reportedly fired by Hezb-e-Islami faction rebels besieging Kabul exploded in both the palace and surrounding buildings, sending giant plumes of smoke and debris skywards.

The Darulaman area is shared by two military factions, Ahmad Shah Masoud's Defence Ministry forces, and General Abdul Momen's 70th Division Infantry.

Gen. Momen, a deputy of the former pro-communist Uzbek militia warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam, remained neutral in the previous round of factional clashes in Kabul last January-February.

Unconfirmed reports by civilians indicated that Hezb guerrillas attacked Gen. Momen's men early Tuesday forcing them back from one of their frontline positions.

While Hezb shelled Darulaman and adjacent government posts, Defence Ministry batteries in north Kabul bombarded the Hezb in the south.

The military situation around Darulaman is complex, with small and isolated pockets of fighters from opposing factions often separated from their main force.

On the hills behind Darulaman Hezb have positioned tanks in posts that locals said formerly belonged to the defence ministry.

The most vulnerable Defence Ministry post is a former communist secret police garrison surrounded on three sides by renegade rebel factions, with Gen. Momen's men guarding their rear. This too received a heavy pounding by Hezb.

One anti-Masoud faction, the pro-Iranian Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat, was not involved in the fighting at Darulaman, even though Wahdat and Hezb are allies.

But Wahdat and Mr. Masoud's forces are engaged in a war of attrition elsewhere in Kabul, with daily exchanges of long-range rockets and infantry artillery.

From their frontline bunkers and trenches facing Darulaman, Wahdat guerrillas drank tea and watched with fascination as Hezb rounds bracketed the old palace.

At a Defence Ministry army brigade headquarters just behind the palace, the incoming Hezb shells ignited a huge fire. The Wahdat gunmen speculated an ammunition dump had taken a direct hit.

One hospital admitted 28 injured Tuesday, most hit by shrapnel.

Dozens of people are believed to have been killed in the last six days of fighting, hospitals and officials said.

The exact figure is not known because most are buried rapidly and the administration that should record the toll has been shattered by a year of similar battles since the guerrillas took power from the fallen communist government in April 1992.

Black smoke billowed into the sky and flames roared through holes punched by rocket-propelled grenades in the roof of the Kabul museum, apparently fired from government positions on nearby hills.

At the foot of the hills weeping friends and relatives gathered at a house where a rocket tore through the roof in the afternoon killing a husband and wife and their four daughters.

"Why, why, why?" wailed one old woman, her face streaked with blood as she raked her fingernails over her skin in grief.

Wahdat officers holding positions around the museum said they had captured the nearby Defence Ministry from government troops but insisted they were only returning fire.

They showed the bodies of five government soldiers killed in battles for the Defence Ministry, an old palace now pockmarked by rockets and bullets.

Ittehad-e-Islami issued a statement denying any part in the battles.

The Islamic coalition government of President Burhamuddin Rabbani accused fighters of Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-e-Islami of taking part.

Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar were in the eastern city of Jalalabad Tuesday for a 11th day of talks to try to break a deadlock over formation of a cabinet under the terms of a peace pact signed by all the fractious leaders in Pakistan in March.

Iran says Rushdie meeting questions Major's judgement

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran's news agency said Wednesday that British Prime Minister John Major's meeting with author Salman Rushdie raised questions about his judgement and said it was likely to harm Britain's trade with Islamic countries.

Defying Iranian warnings, Mr. Major met with the British writer Tuesday in London. It was the first such gesture of support from a British prime minister since the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini condemned Mr. Rushdie to death four years ago for writing "The Satanic Verses," a novel the Iranian leader said blasphemed Islam.

Mr. Rushdie said the meeting "will send a message around the world, both to our allies and to the government of Iran" in support of his campaign to lift the death sentence and nearly \$3 million bounty placed on his head by an Iranian fatwa.

A spokeswoman in Mr. Major's office, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he had affirmed his government's full support for Mr. Rushdie's rights and expressed regret that Iran had not repudiated Ayatollah Khomeini's "fatwa."

The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), which is monitored in Nicosia, said Mr. Rushdie and the British government knew "that the fatwa is not a political matter, but an irrevocable religious decree."

Mr. Major's action was "an act of defiance that is likely to have widespread repercussions in relations and trade with Islamic countries," the news agency said.

"Coming at a time his government is facing a barrage of criticism about its performance and credibility, the meeting can only further question the prime minister's sense of judgment, especially when it is thought the European Community (EC) desires to improve Iranian ties," the commentary said.

Britain severed diplomatic links with Iran in 1989 because of the Rushdie affair. They were restored 18 months later but only at the charge d'affaires level.

Otherwise, Britain's approach to the controversy has been one of mostly quiet diplomacy while Western hostages were held by pro-Iran militants in Lebanon. The last hostages were released in 1992.

Mr. Major's meeting with the author culminates a policy switch. British relations with Iran have been strained since Feb. 4, when foreign office minister Douglas Hogg met with Rushdie.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE council reasserts claim to islands

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) consultative council reiterated Tuesday the UAE's claim to three Gulf islands in dispute with Iran. In its first policy statement the Federal National Council (FNC) said it supported peaceful means to regain control over Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunb islands.

"The council expresses its strong disappointment and deep worry over Iran's measures... on Abu Musa and its continuing occupation of the Greater and Lesser Tunbs," it said. "It expresses support for peaceful means the UAE has taken to reassert its sovereignty over the three islands." The FNC issued the statement in response to an address by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan last February vowing to exert every effort to find a peaceful way to resolve the dispute and restore UAE sovereignty over the islands. The UAE says Iran last year virtually annexed Abu Musa, jointly controlled by the two countries since 1971. In response the UAE reasserted its claims to the Tunb islands, which Iran occupied in 1971 under the late Shah.

Algerian court sentences three to death

ALGIERS (R) — An Algerian military court Tuesday condemned to death three fugitive Muslim fundamentalists who tried to attack a military post, the official news agency APS said. Chenik Bouzidi, Mohammed Berrahal and Lakhdar Laaziz were tried in their absence by Ouargla military court, 575 kilometres southeast of Algiers. The sentences raised to 76 the number of people condemned to death since Algeria was put under a state of emergency in February 1991 during fundamentalist unrest. Six men were executed early this year and eight had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. The three fugitives were part of a group of some 20 Algerians-based "terrorists," the official name for fundamentalists, who carried out a night attack on the "control and detection post" in Ouargla last September. The duty officer, Master Sergeant Abdeldjabbar Chatti and another accomplice, Sergeant Mohammed Mefteh, were to let the attackers in to steal arms, the agency said. But a suspicious sentry raised the alarm by firing his gun and the group and the two accomplices fled. Chatti was shot by security forces a month later. Five men in dock were given jail terms. Mefteh and a group member, Mouloud Alaoui, were sentenced to life imprisonment, two others were each given five-year terms and another was jailed for three years, APS said.

Ireland to send 80 soldiers to Somalia

DUBLIN (AFP) — The Irish government announced Tuesday it is to send some 80 troops to Somalia to join the U.N. peacekeeping operation there. The mission will require an amendment to the defence laws of the Irish Republic. The soldiers, mostly logistics and transport specialists, will join 28,000 other troops and 2,800 civilians as part of the UNOSOM II operation in the war-ravaged East African country. The required amendment to Ireland's 1960 defence laws, which could be debated next week by parliament, stems from the nature of the U.N. operation role in Somalia, which authorises foreign troops there to use force. Foreign Minister Dick Spring denied the mission called into question Ireland's traditional principle of neutrality.

Gulf gets its first American university

DUBAI (AP) — The American University of Dubai (AUD) will open to students next September, its vice president announced Tuesday. Salim Al Ghammal, who is also assistant under-secretary of the Education Ministry, told reporters that AUD will be affiliated with major American educational institutions, and named Monmouth College in New Jersey as one. AUD will be the first such American institution in the Gulf region. The Middle East, however, has two other American universities, in Cairo and Beirut.

Ruling on U.S. embassy bombers reversed

BEIRUT (AP) — The military court of appeals reversed Tuesday a verdict by a lower tribunal that exonerated the 1983 bombers of the U.S. embassy in Beirut, the state-run National News Agency reported. It said the new verdict annuls the 2-week-old ruling of a Beirut military tribunal that the truck bombing was a political crime and its perpetrators consequently were covered by a general amnesty declared two years ago. The agency said the military court of appeals, the highest martial judicial authority, handed down its verdict in a closed session headed by Judge Amin Nassar. It gave no other details.

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Flower arrangement
Saplings
Adornment of cars
Decoration of wedding halls

Al Medina Al Munawwara Street, between Al Waha Circle and Kilo Traffic Lights, near Chen's Chinese Restaurant.

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AMMAN BACCALAUREATE SCHOOL

The Amman Baccalaureate School seeks applications from qualified and experienced teachers for the following vacancies in August 1993:

- 1. Maths Teacher**, to teach, in English and Arabic, Middle and Senior School grades.
- 2. Part-Time Computer Teacher**, to take classes in the Middle School.
- 3. Part-Time qualified and experienced Ceramics Teacher**, to teach students preparing for the IGCSE and IB examinations.

All applicants should be bilingual in Arabic and English. Application forms may be obtained from the school's reception desk, phone 845572, 847191 and should be returned by Tuesday 18 May 1993.

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JPMC announces the invitation to Tender No. 20F/93 for the supply of:

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The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Sunday 30/5/93. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (15) for each set of tender documents. The closing date for submitting tenders is 12:00 hours local time Monday 14, June 1993.

Thabet Al Taher
General Manager

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Pict Herald
17:45 Superchamps
18:15 L'ecole des fans
19:00 News in French
19:15 Histoirs
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Special Programme
21:10 Quotien Leap
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature Film: "Absolute Strangers"

PRAYER TIMES

04:57 Fajr
05:36 Sunrise (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:32 Dhuhr
16:12 Asr
19:28 Maghrib
19:56 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch Tel. 810740
Assamites of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622666
Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771351
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625255
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823874 and 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Kingdom will remain under the effect of the unstable weather conditions. Haze/fog, it will be partly cloudy to cloudy at times, with scattered showers of rain expected, and winds will be northwesterly moderate, freshening at times. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with a chance for scattered showers, and winds will be northerly moderate and seas wavy.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 10 / 21
Aqaba 17 / 30
Dhahran 9 / 24
Jordan Valley 15 / 26

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 20, Aqaba 27. Humidity readings: Amman 42 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bahjat Bader 849362
Dr. Ahmed Youssef 783394
Dr. Saeed Ali 783285
Dr. Walid Al Mawri 675485
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fendous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637035
Natroch pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Salam pharmacy 637660
Najla pharmacy 847632

DRBD:
Dr. Mouna Sharani 622101
Al Oud pharmacy 661011
Jordan Television 773111

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 603021
Police Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 661111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 622101
Repairs 661011
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661011
Jordan Television 773111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Al-Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mahdi, J. Amn 661400
Palestine, Shamsi 6641714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Munasser Hospital 6672219
The Islamic, Abdali 66012757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Mahajra 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 7751126
Army, Marka 89161375
Queen Abla Hospital 80224050
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323
Zarqa National Hospital 09900560

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
06:45 New Delhi (RJ)
16:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
16:15 Riyadh (RJ)

Bin Sina Hospital 09985732
Al-Haram Medical Hospital 09999990
IBRD:
Princess Beama Hospital 02275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02272725
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital 02247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03314111

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:30 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:00 Riyadh (RJ)
14:45 Rome (AZ)
18:00 Dubai (EM)
21:05 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:15 Beirut (RJ)
12:00 Rome (RJ)
12:05 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
12:30 Larnaca, Athens (RJ)
12:15 Montreal, New York (RJ)
13:00 London (RJ)
13:15 Paris (RJ)
22:30 Oslo (RJ)
22:45 Bahrain Doha (RJ)
22:45 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:25 Damascus, Paris (AF)
07:05 Larnaca (CY)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in \$/kg

Banana	700 / 700
Banana (Mukassar)	680 / 680
Beans	430 / 430
Cabbage	70 / 40
Cauliflower	150 / 90
Cucumbers (large)	250 / 180
Cucumbers (small)	120 / 80
Eggplant	240 / 180
Garlic	300 / 180
Grapesfruit	260 / 200
Leek	240 / 180
Marrow (large)	380 / 500
Marrow (small)	150 / 100
Mint	80
Onion (dry)	230 / 160
Onion (green)	450 / 350
Orange	280 / 180
Pepper (hot)	600 / 250
Pepper (sweet)	200 / 150
Potato	210 / 160
Tomato	520 / 300
Splach	230 / 200

Home News

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MAY 13-14, 1993

Queen receives distinguished service award

AMMAN (J.T.)—Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday received the Distinguished Service Award in honour of her work in support of women and children in Jordan.

The award was presented to Queen Noor at a Washington D.C. fund-raising dinner for Save the Children's projects in Jordan.

At the ceremony, the Queen said Save the Children's history in Jordan is a success story that reflects the dedication, dynamism and vision of the organization's commitments throughout the world.

Save the Children's programmes in Jordan include a rug-weaving project for be-

down women in the hills of Bani Hamida near the city of Madaba. The Bani Hamida project, which started in 1985 with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), is designed to empower women and provide better quality of life for their children.

In 1987, Save the Children-sponsored programmes grew to include another income-generating project for Palestinian refugees in Amman.

Today, more than 750 women are active in the Bani Hamida rug weaving project and 850 Palestinians participate in the Jordan River Designs Project.

These cottage industries

draw upon the cultural heritage of those families in weaving and embroidery and are complemented by preventive health care projects for preschool children and their mothers, and early childhood development efforts through children's libraries and kindergartens. They are also complemented by the provision of urban and rural revolving credit programmes.

Queen Noor said that by June 1993, the two projects will have generated \$1 million of supplemental income to underprivileged bedouin and refugee women to enable them to better feed, clothe, shelter and educate their children.

The Noor Al Hussein Foundation works closely with Save the Children on these micro-enterprise projects.

The foundation was established to consolidate the administration of the Queen's increasingly diverse and expanding development efforts; to research new methods of socio-economic and cultural development, and to supplement public/government projects to meet Jordan's evolving national development requirements. The NHF worked closely with Save the Children in the establishment of the Jordan Design and Trade Center to promote local, regional and international marketing of Jordanian handicrafts.



PRIME MINISTER Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Wednesday confers with visiting Algerian Education Minister Ahmad Jabbar who voiced his country's desire to benefit from Jordan's political and educational expertise. Mr. Jabbar said his country seeks to introduce comprehensive reforms to its educational system and was counting on help from Jordan. The Prime Minister told Mr. Jabbar that the Kingdom desires to strengthen ties with Algeria through solidarity and cooperation, adding that the world's rapid changes

and developments can be dealt with via increased efforts and utilisation of national potentials. The meeting was attended by the Algerian ambassador to Jordan and Deputy Premier and Education Minister Thougan Al Hindawi. The two sides reviewed Algerian-Jordanian relations, ways to cooperate in education fields and Jordan's democratic experiment. Over the last two days Mr. Hindawi and Mr. Jabbar held similar talks at the Education in Ministry (Petra photo)

PSD burns seized hashish

AMMAN (Petra)—Authorities Wednesday burned 3,332 kilos of hashish, 65 grammes of opium, 4.31 kilos of heroin and 18,550 (caption pills in the kilns of the Jordan Cement Factories in Fuhes, reported Public Security Department (PSD) official Hisham Ensour.

A special committee comprising representatives of the PSD, the State Security Court and the ministries of health and finance supervised the burning of the illicit drugs seized by police.

According to Col. Ensour, the drugs were estimated to have a street value of JD 3 million, adding that they were seized in different drug trafficking attempts through Jordanian territory.

Commercial sector employs 72,000 people

AMMAN (Petra)—A total of 89,000 persons are employed in the industrial sector in Jordan according to a report issued by the Department of Statistics.

The department said these employees are working in 15,348 industrial establishments in Jordan.

Of the total number, it said, about 84,000 are males and nearly 5,000 are females.

The department said the number of persons working in the commercial sector stands at 72,000, who are employed by 34,574 establishments.

It said a total of 39,500 people work either permanently or seasonally in the Agricultural sector.

New committee formed to draft election law for consideration

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A five-member committee of political activists has been formed to draw up the broadlines for a proposed election law to be presented to the concerned authorities.

The committee, comprising Taher Masri, Salim Zou'bi, Samir Habashneh, Muna Shuqair and Talal Omari, was named at the end of a meeting Monday in which party leaders and political activists, opponents and supporters of an amendment to the existing law or the introduction of a new one unanimously rejected the issuance of a law by the government.

They insisted that a temporary law should pass through Parliament and asserted that issuing such a law while Parliament was in recess was "unconstitutional."

According to the basic law, the government has the right to issue temporary laws in cases "of necessity."

"There was a relative consensus among participants (at the meeting) to keep the present law

with the introduction of some amendments," said Mu'nis Al Razzaz, one of the leaders of the hitherto unlicensed Arab Democratic Jordanian Party (ADJP) which organised Monday's meeting.

Deputy Fakhri Ka'war who proposed forming the committee said that the amendments to present elections law should affect the most important items such as "changing the age of voters from 19 to 18 and increasing the number of seats from 80 to 100." Mr. Ka'war further proposed that a petition based on the committee's finding should be signed by deputies and political activists and then presented to the government.

Samir Habashneh, a leading ADJP member, warned that if participants had fears of the government's formulating a temporary law they must equally be apprehensive of a law drafted by the present parliament since that would also be formulated according to the deputies' interests.

"The law must not only be drafted outside the executive authority's domain, but also outside

their parliament," Mr. Habashneh said. "The law should be drawn by all political parties concerned."

Mr. Habashneh's proposal was seconded by former Prime Minister and Deputy Taher Al Masri who said that deputies should not have the right to form a law on their own since "it directly serves their interests."

The concept of one-man, one-vote law which is increasingly gaining support was extensively discussed at the meeting. However, the concept was attacked by independent politicians who contended that "it reinforces tribalism in Jordan."

Al Mustakbal (Future) Party member Abu Jamous, rejected the charge that the one-man, one-vote formula would reinforce tribalism and said that it would only strengthen the chances of "strong candidates."

Tayseer Zibari, the secretary general of the leftist Jordan Democratic People's Party, advocated that Jordan's electoral districts be combined into one and all citizens elect form one list of candidates.

Senator Husni Ayesh, proposed amendments to the law based on the "American model" by allocating two seats for each governorate and then dividing the remaining seats in accordance with the number of inhabitants.

Ayesh on the other hand, strongly criticised what he termed continuous indifference of many to women's right to hold parliamentary seat. He proposed that men and women should seat seats 60 to 40 either way. The proposal did not appeal to Muna Shuqair, who has been vigorously opposing a quota for women in her column in the Arabic daily, Al Dustour. Mr. Shuqair asserted women were not a minority.

Islamists did not attend Monday's meeting. But Mr. Razzaz told the Jordan Times that the next meeting will have to include Islamists.

He said that the absence of Islamists from Monday's meeting was because of some "communication problems."

According to Mr. Razzaz, independent Islamist leader, Shubailat might also attend the next session.



Volunteers can donate blood at 27 branches of the Blood Bank around the country (File photo)

Blood Bank seeks regular donations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A two-week Public awareness campaign which started on May 8, is designed to encourage citizens to make the blood donation process a voluntary and regular habit, said Blood Bank Director Janet Merza.

Dr. Merza told Wednesday the Jordan Times that the campaign, implemented by the Blood Bank in cooperation with the Health and Education Minister, seeks to show that blood donations should be motivated by readiness to offer humanitarian service since the blood is being distributed free to people in need.

"We do not charge patients for the blood they draw from the bank in emergency cases and in surgical operations but we ask that people donate blood in return, said Mr. Merza.

The campaign, she said aims at ending this practice and making donations a voluntary effort by

the public so that the blood bank is constantly and sufficiently supplied.

Dr. Merza added that the campaign also seeks misconceptions about blood donation and its effects on humans. "Blood donation is a healthy practice and does not harm the body in any way," said Dr. Merza.

She explained that donating blood helps stimulate the creation of new cells in the bone marrow, aids in protecting the body from many illnesses and reduces the chances of heart attacks and high blood pressure. "We hope that the campaign will win the support of other institutions, universities, community colleges and schools, Dr. Merza said, adding "we need the media to give wide coverage of this campaign."

She said blood can be donated at 27 branches of the blood bank around the country.

At present she said 53, Jordanian private and government hospitals benefit from the blood bank's services.

Jordan to offer Iran technical aviation help

AMMAN (J.T.)—Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Ali Suheimat Wednesday voiced Jordan's willingness to extend technical assistance to Iran through the Civil Aviation Authority and Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, its affiliated units and the (RJ) maintenance workshop.

At a meeting here Wednesday with visiting Iranian Deputy Minister of Transport and head of the Iranian Civil Aviation Authority Mohammad Najiryan, Mr. Suheimat said Jordan welcomes cooperation with Iran and looks forward to an agreement on operating regular flights between Amman and Tehran by the summer in 1994.

The minister said that such move would greatly contribute to the strengthening of Iranian-Jordanian ties and enhance their cooperation in "human and cultural fields."

Mr. Najiryan said his visit to Jordan gave him a chance to familiarise himself with the country's accomplishments in economic and tourism fields.

He agreed that direct air links between Iran and Jordan would contribute towards further exchanges of visits by officials as well as economic and tourism groups.

Mr. Suheimat accepted an invitation to visit Iran, which was extended to him by Mr. Najiryan for Iran's Transport Minister.

Present at Wednesday's meeting were Civil Aviation Director Ahmad Jweiber and Iranian and Jordanian Officials.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan to attend education meeting in Tunisia

AMMAN (Petra)—Jordan will take part in the meetings of the 47th session of the Arab committee entrusted with preparing educational programmes for Palestinian students in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip due to open in Tunisia next Monday. In its week-long meetings the committee will discuss the prospect of broadcasting television and radio educational programmes to the occupied territories to make up for school days lost by Palestinians during strikes and curfews imposed by the Israeli authorities.

Family planning group to hold population seminar

AMMAN (Petra)—The Jordanian Family Planning and Protection Society will organise a seminar Thursday on the population situation in Jordan. The seminar, to be organised in cooperation with Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAF), will discuss resources and population, health, economic and social issues and the goals of the society.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed

time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by Adnan Al Sharif at Baladna Art Gallery.

★ Close-up photograph exhibition entitled "Intimate Petra" by Paula Williams-Brown and original embossed, hand-painted prints by Rima Farah at The Gallery, Inter-Continental Hotel.

★ Art exhibition entitled "Fragments: Weavings and Works on Paper" by Kevin A. Elach and Margaret M. Hinch at the American Centre.

★ Exhibition of paintings by

Saba Katibah Noursi at the Spanish Cultural.

★ Art exhibition of works by artists from Jordan, Iraq and Morocco at Alia Art Gallery.

FILMS

★ Feature film entitled "Shirky's Machine" at 6 p.m. at the American Centre (Rated, 120 min.).

EUROPEAN FILM WEEK

★ Italian film entitled "Il Giardino dei Ciliegi" (The Cherry Orchard) at 8 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.



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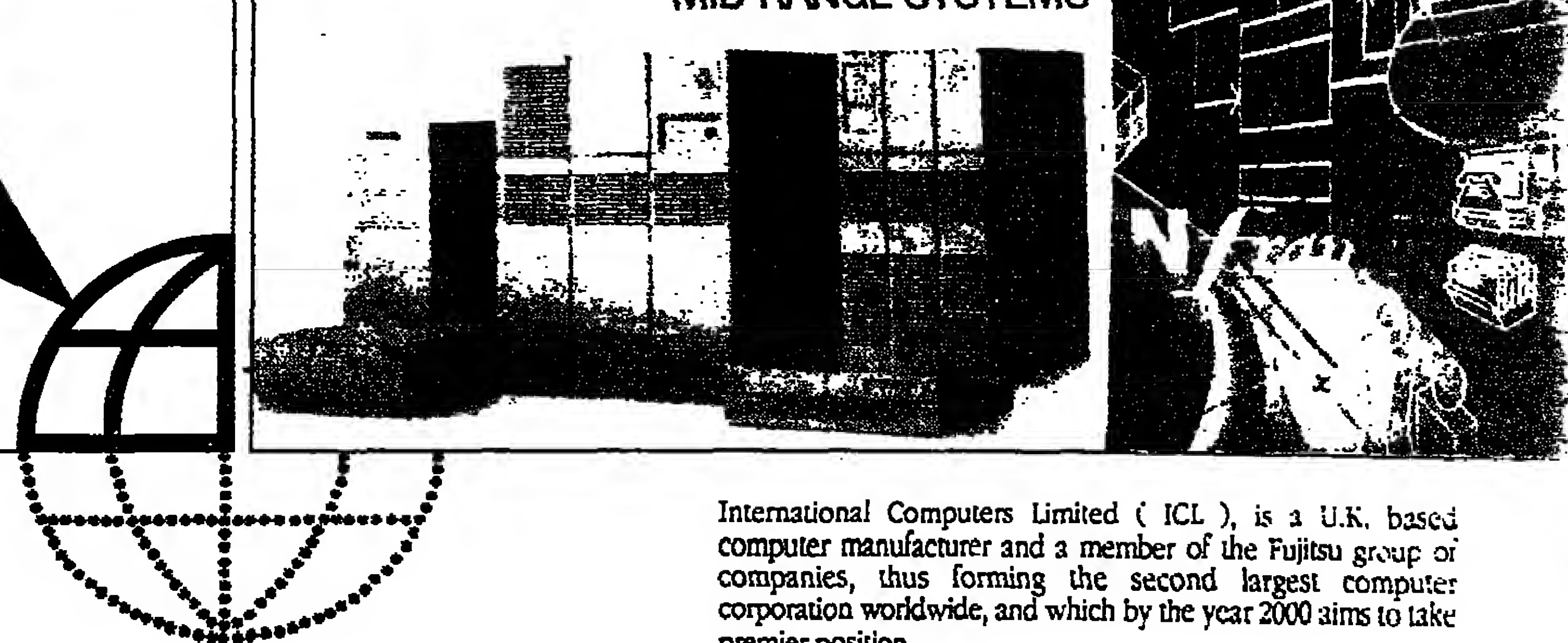
The New Recreation Club At The Forte Grand Amman Is Now Open For Membership.

(Formerly Arman Plaza Hotel)
Queen Noor Street, Shamsiah P.O. Box 450029 Amman 11110 Jordan
Tel: 962 6741111 Fax: 962 674261

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ICL

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

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Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

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Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

Subscription and advertising rates are available from the

Jordan Times advertising department.

To democracy with justice

NOBODY SEEMS to be able to claim that the current elections law in Jordan is perfectly constitutional and democratic. But judging from the ongoing debate, in which many political activists appear to advocate change and which Parliament members seem to resist, it is clear that the law, as it stands, is at best controversial.

On one count at least, the voting age, now fixed at 19, the law can be seen as unconstitutional since the Constitution gives full and equal rights to all citizens who are 18 or older. The fact that the law grants citizens' votes different weights contributes to the notion that the law is also unconstitutional.

The present law was introduced in 1986 and was twice amended by Parliament in 1989 when political parties and political activity were frowned upon or viewed as illegal. The realities and fears of that era have dramatically changed and dissipated since then. The democratic experiment that Jordan launched in 1989 has so far demonstrated that the Jordanian people are politically mature and that fears of political activity leading to turmoil were old hang ups.

It is true that the long absence of political parties from political life has created many imbalances both in the relationship of political activists with the regime and among themselves. However, the consensus that all political factions reached over the Constitution and the National Charter is a demonstration that all are intent on nurturing and protecting the democratic process.

It is therefore of utmost importance at this juncture to debate the merits and demerits of the present elections law, as His Majesty the King advised recently, and to formulate thereafter a new law that would address the higher interests of Jordan and the Jordanian people as a whole.

But any changes to the law must be made in the most democratic way possible. It might be only sensible therefore to hold a general assembly grouping all political parties, politicians and independent political activists to debate the issue and come up with the necessary amendments that we think are truly needed. Such a consensus agreement can then be either formulated into a temporary law or forwarded to Parliament for approval.

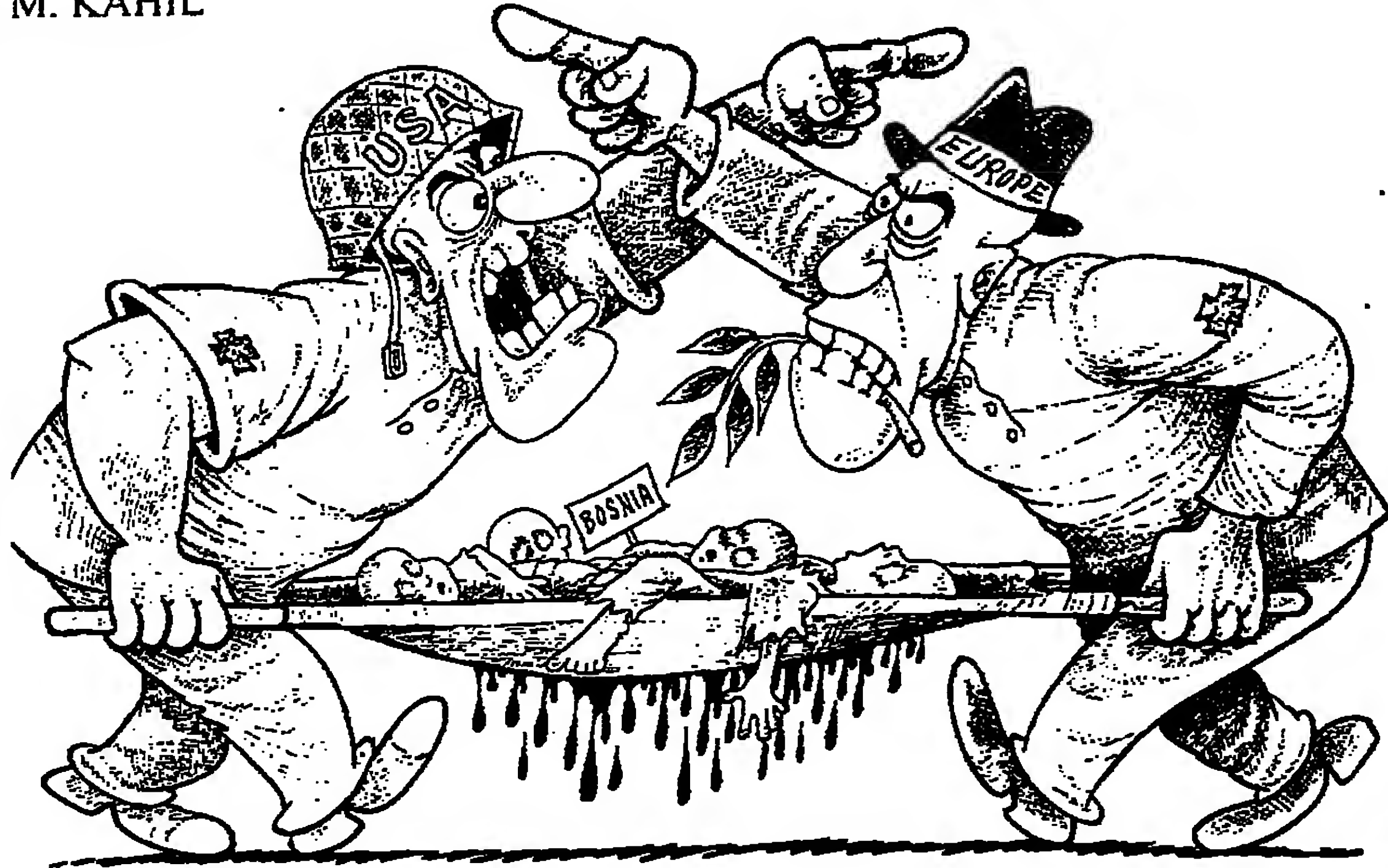
Jordan is on the threshold of becoming a model for democracy in the region. It should carefully calculate its steps on the way to occupy that noble position, but that can only be done when democracy and justice are enjoyed by all our people.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAWT AL SHAAB daily voiced the Arab World's dismay and disappointment at the failure of the peace talks in Washington and said failure can only encourage Israel to go ahead with its practices against the Palestinians. Failure came as a result of Israel's intransigence, on the one hand, and failure by the U.S. administration to live up to its promises and pledges to play the role of full partner in the peace making process, on the other, charged the daily. The paper said that the Israelis continue to reject the implementation of U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, on which the current negotiations were based, and are offering proposals to the Palestinians which fall far short of achieving their national rights. Without committing itself to the requirements of a just and lasting peace Israel can by no means reach an agreement with the Arab parties, the paper continued. The coming 48 hours can reveal whether the talks will continue on all tracks or whether the two sides will admit that no solution is possible, added the paper. In either case one can only blame or praise the American administration for the success or failure of these talks because, said the paper, the negotiations were sponsored by the United States which ought to see to it that justice is established in fulfilment of international legitimacy.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily called on the government to officially declare that Jordan is an impoverished state and suggested that it form a special committee to dedicate its time and effort to addressing poverty which concerns the whole Jordanian public. Usama Sh'ishaa said that no bold speeches or political rhetoric can solve the problem of poverty in Jordan and no campaigns for elections would do any good. The only solution for this chronic issue, he said, is in a strong economic task force, equipped with a scientific mind, a sense of national responsibility, sufficient expertise and sufficient funds. This task force should enjoy unlimited authority in dealing with financial institutions here and abroad and should be able to withstand any kind of pressure from any source, demanded the writer. He said that our only chance to rid the country of poverty lies with the task force and the coming election when the Jordanian people should choose only those persons who they believe can dedicate their time and efforts not to speeches in Parliament, but to addressing economic issues.

M. KAHIL



Once-clear Clinton policy on Bosnia now 'in holding pattern'

By Ruth Sinai
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As recently as Friday, President Bill Clinton said that within days the United States and its European allies would agree on military action in Bosnia. On Monday, the White House declared its Bosnia policy "in a holding pattern." What happened?

Basically, the administration found that it lacked international support for the military plans, that it was uncertain about its long-term policy on the former Yugoslavia, and that in the absence of these two ingredients it couldn't make a convincing case for intervention to the American people.

Mr. Clinton found that the Europeans, familiar with the ancient hatreds of the Balkans and wary of a quagmire, were reluctant to take offensive action.

He also found scepticism within his administration and Congress about the longer-term goals of such intervention. If the United States bombed Serb artillery targets for several days to silence the guns — as was apparently the plan presented to the Europeans

— what would happen if the Serbs retaliated by attacking U.N. relief troops?

If, as Mr. Clinton wanted, the U.N. lifted its arms embargo and allowed the Muslims to arm themselves, who would deliver the weapons and train the Muslim fighters? The United States has quietly obtained funding from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for such a scheme, but would U.S. troops have to carry it out?

And with the Muslims trained and armed, what incentive would they have to come to the negotiating table? Would the war then spread and engulf volatile neighboring provinces? Would the United States have to intervene there, too?

"We've got to be very sure what our interests are, what our objectives are, what the costs are going to be, what we can achieve, and how we can get out, and none of those things have been determined, none of them have been articulated to the Congress or to the American people at this point," said Representative Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

If Mr. Clinton knows the answers to these questions, he isn't saying.

The seeds of Mr. Clinton's dilemma were sown during the election campaign, when he criticised then-President Bush for failing to stop the killings in Bosnia. It was one of the few areas of foreign policy on which Mr. Bush was vulnerable, and Mr. Clinton took advantage.

The reason Mr. Bush chose not to involve the United States in Bosnia, said former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, is that "we were unable to answer those questions about the use of military force that we answered specifically in the case of the Gulf."

Indeed, Mr. Clinton found the going tough when confronted with the hard choices of using military force to carry out his promise.

The turning point came Saturday, after telling a sceptical news corps at a Rose Garden news conference Friday that "there's a lot more agreement than you think" with the Europeans on military force. Mr. Clinton met Saturday with Secretary of State Warren Christopher who had just returned from Europe.

What he heard was a dispiriting

litany of European reluctance: how they preferred to wait for the Bosnian Serb referendum next weekend on the U.N. peace plan, how they wanted to wait for Serbia to enforce its promised embargo against the Bosnian Serbs, how they wanted another U.N. resolution to approve air strikes on the Bosnian Serbs, and how they opposed Mr. Clinton's proposal for arming Bosnian Muslims.

The meeting, which White House aides billed in advance as the start of a 48-hour consultation blitz to prepare a plan for announcement this week, lasted less than three hours. Mr. Clinton's weekly radio address Saturday was devoted to campaign reform. A planned Sunday meeting with congressional leaders to discuss Bosnia was put off.

On Monday, Mr. Clinton left Washington to campaign for his economic programme. "Bosnia is in a holding pattern at this time," said Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers.

She said Mr. Clinton would call allied leaders later this week to discuss Bosnia, but she indicated that no decision would be made before the weekend referendum in Bosnia.

Given that the United States and its allies are highly sceptical of the referendum's feasibility and effectiveness, the allies' next steps are as murky as the civil war in Bosnia.

What if the Danes say 'no' again to European unity?

By Sally Jacobsen
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — For the European Community, it would be a bad dream come true.

On May 18, Denmark votes again on the Maastricht Treaty on closer political and economic links. The Danes have turned it down once and the latest polls show they might turn it down again.

The first time, rejection stalled unity plans. This time, a "no" vote would likely kill the treaty, which mandates a common foreign policy and a single currency by the end of the decade.

It would jolt European currency markets, erode business confidence at a time of recession in many of the dozen EC nations, and raise questions about Denmark's continued membership in the trading bloc.

Although France, Germany and other nations committed to unity are likely to forge ahead without recalcitrant members, negotiating a new, less comprehensive treaty could take years.

The result could be a fragmented community and not the powerful, united giant of 340 million people that some Europeans had hoped would rival the United States in world influence and economic strength.

"It would throw the community into disarray," said Yehuda Lukacs, international relations professor at American University in Washington.

A Gallup institute poll published Sunday in a Danish newspaper showed 46 per cent of Danish voters backed the treaty, down from 51 a week ago. The number of opponents swelled to 34 per cent from 30 per cent. Another 15 per cent were undecided and a five per cent planned to abstain.

The drop occurred even though Denmark has been exempted from treaty clauses calling for a common European currency, a joint defence, and other provisions. The concessions were granted after Denmark rejected the treaty in June.

The pact, reached among EC leaders in December 1991 in the Dutch town of Maastricht, must be ratified by all 12 EC members before it can take effect. And Denmark isn't the only hurdle.

Britain has not ratified it, preferring to wait and see what the Danes do. Appeals questioning its constitutionality are pending in Germany's highest court.

EC officials and analysts insist the Danes won't turn it down because of the concessions Copenhagen was granted to gain

its support. But the fear of another "no" vote weighs heavily on everyone's mind.

Normally talkative officials are tight-lipped. The EC's executive agency, frequently the target of complaints about excessive bureaucracy, is laying low. So is EC Chief Executive Jacques Delors, a leader of the unity drive.

If the Danes still vote "no", the community will grind to a halt while leaders consider their next move.

Analysts predict Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and probably France would continue the campaign to ward unity, even though the new rightist government in Paris adds some uncertainty to France's past pro-European stands.

"The result could be a fragmented community and not the powerful, united giant of 340 million people that some Europeans had hoped would rival the United States in world influence and economic strength."

"The core member states have made it clear" that a Danish rejection cannot "block further deepening of the community," said veteran EC consultant Stanley Crossick.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd has hinted that even Britain might sign on to a new scheme if the Danes bow out. "I'm not saying that we'll not take part in any other arrangement," he said recently.

Analysts say most EC nations would rally behind proposals for an economic and monetary union, with a joint central bank and a single currency by 1999.

Some nations would also try to pursue a common foreign, security and defence policy. The 10-nation Western European Union already acts like the EC's defence arm. Only Denmark and neutral Ireland do not belong.

Norway and Sweden, Denmark's neighbours, might have second thoughts about membership applications already filed with the EC. But Austria and Finland would go ahead with theirs, analysts predict.

Denmark might feel pressure to leave the community entirely or remain only in the single EC market, formed Jan. 1 when the bloc eliminated many barriers to the flow of money, goods, services and people.

Innocence betrayed: European socialism is dying

By William Pfaff

PARIS — There has been a moral collapse of the West European left, implicated in its near-total political collapse. The Socialist movement, which a half-dozen years ago was in power in nine of the 17 major West European nations, survives as a member of only six European governments.

In two of those it is threatened. In Italy, where the entire political system is on the brink of a quasi-revolutionary reconstruction, the Socialist Party is deeply compromised by corruption. Bettino Craxi, the former Socialist prime minister, has had to take refuge in parliamentary immunity against the corruption charges brought against him by magistrates.

Spain confronts parliamentary elections June 6, brought forward by Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez precisely because of the threat posed to his Socialist government by evidence of corruption among some of his Socialist colleagues.

There is symbolism in the suicide 10 days ago — on May 1, the European workers' holiday — of France's former Socialist prime minister, Pierre Bérégovoy. The symbolism is that of a certain innocence betrayed. No one believes Mr. Bérégovoy corrupt, but his final weeks in government were overshadowed by the revelation that seven years ago, in order to purchase an apartment, he had accepted an interest-free loan from a financier of doubtful reputation, nonetheless a long-time intimate of President Francois Mitterrand himself.

Mr. Bérégovoy was from an immigrant working-class background and attended a railway trade school with the ambition of becoming a station master. Joining the Socialist Party put him on a different track, which eventually led him to the economy ministry and later the prime ministry. In those offices he was constrained to adopt economic policies that seemed to many of the Socialist rank and file to contradict their social reformism and the utopianism of traditional socialism.

Many French Socialists be-

lieved that Mr. Bérégovoy's commitment to economic austerity and his defence of a strong franc in a period of currency instability were responsible for the Socialist government's crushing defeat in national elections in March. Since that defeat some Socialist deputies are said to have snubbed him in the halls of the National Assembly or refused to shake his hand. A conservative newspaper claims that President Mitterrand himself — with whom Mr. Bérégovoy had for years been closely allied — made no effort to see Mr. Bérégovoy after the defeat, and until the Wednesday before the weekend of his suicide had failed even to return his phone calls.

A dozen years ago the young Socialist movements taking power in France and Spain truly believed they could change people's lives — not only their material conditions of life but the very nature of their society. This was the difference between the left in Europe and in the United States. In Europe the left has always tended toward utopianism, influenced by Marxist millenarianism as well as by idealism about Third World liberation. The European left believed it possible for a democratic Socialist government to break with the international economic system, dominated by capitalism.

In the United States, utopianism has been a phenomenon only on the fringes of the left. American liberalism has been socially progressive but also consistently practical in outlook. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Johnson's New Society were experimental and pragmatic, and not in the least ideological or utopian.

In the United States, everyone is an optimist, including the so-called conservatives and reactionaries, all of whom believe their ideas can transform society for the better. Europe is populated by pessimists. To be an optimist in Europe, expecting change to produce a better life for all, automatically identifies you as a member of the political left.

European socialism's collapse has come first from the imprac-

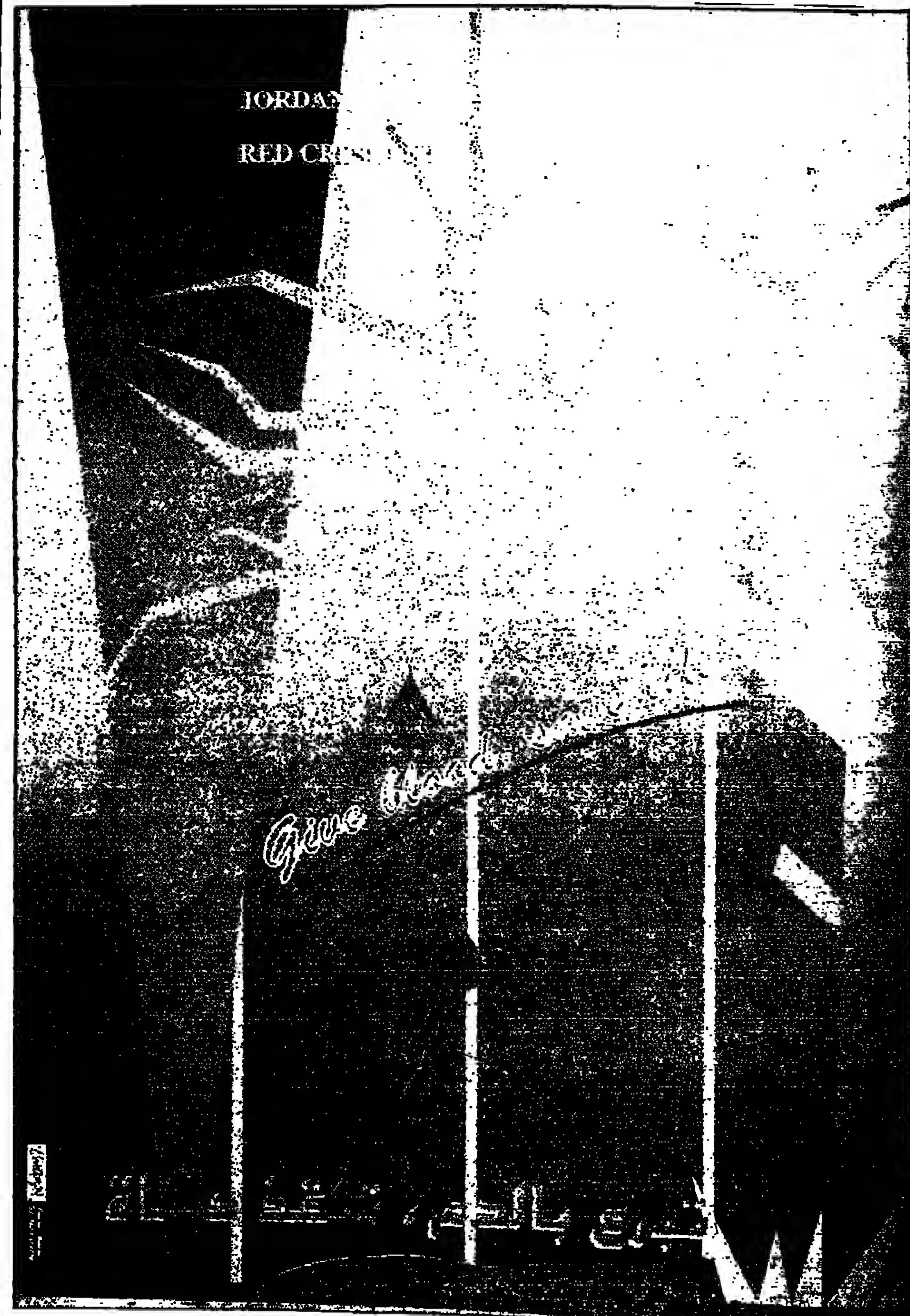
ticity of its original utopian programme. These had to be abandoned. The West German Socialists did it under the leadership of Willy Brandt as long ago as 1959. The French and Spanish Socialists did so soon after coming to power in the 1980s. All of them even the Scandinavian Social Democrats — have subsequently found themselves conducting economic and social policies very close to those of right conservative or centre-right governments.

An austerity dictated by international economic forces has meant high unemployment, higher taxes and reduced social spending. This has seemed not only a betrayal of Socialist idealism but has had the practical consequence of undermining the Socialist parties' electoral base. Working-class votes have tended to be drained off into populist and anti-immigrant movements, or to be split off by social and "cultural" controversies. Middle-class sympathisers have often gone over to the Greens. In Germany, the constitutional debate over political refugees and the use abroad of the army has divided the left.

The Socialist leaders themselves — having no wealthy individual or corporate sponsors — tolerated or invited illegal contributions. Not all of that money was faithfully passed on to party treasuries. Money scandals have had ruinous effect on the political fortunes of the Italian, French and Spanish Socialist parties.

Whether there is a future for socialism now is an interesting question. There will always be a reform party in democratic systems, of course, but it is possible that the Socialist movement itself, with its historical ties to Marxist thought and to discredited conceptions of state ownership of productive resources, now has seen its day.

Its demise will have been speeded by the money corruption of leaders who presented themselves as the moral superiors of their opponents, but the essential fact may be that historical socialism is now a used-up force, and that it is time for something new. — International Herald Tribune.



Algeria outlines path for return to democracy

By John Baggaley
Reuters

ALGIERS — After more than a year of emergency rule and bloody conflict with Islamic fundamentalists, Algeria's military-backed government has sketched out a shadowy path for a cautious return to democracy.

In a weekend address, head of state Ali Kafi held out the prospect of more liberalised political activity — paralleled by relentless security pressure to break up armed groups blamed for hundreds of killings.

Mr. Kafi promised a referendum this year on how the return to democracy would be managed. He did not say what questions would be put but diplomats saw the poll as a crucial first stage which must attract enough votes for the result to be seen as a real consensus.

"The referendum has to attract at least a credible number of voters to provide any legitimacy for future action," a European diplomat said Sunday, hours after Mr. Kafi's address.

"At least there was a reference to a resumption of elections which there hasn't been for some time, even if the speech left a lot of questions unanswered," said a Western diplomat.

The speech followed weeks of consultations with different groups as time runs out on the collective presidency whose mandate ends on Dec. 31.

Mr. Kafi said the unelected advisory National Consultative Council would be expanded to take in political parties and other groups, and would be given "reinforced prerogatives."

"There's a flickering light now at the end of the tunnel," a Western diplomat said.

"They seem to be advancing by minute steps but increasingly bringing in the parties who initially denounced the presidency as unconstitutional," said a European envoy.

The five-man presidency was installed after President Chadli Benjedid resigned over the advance of Muslim fundamentalists in a general election. Diplomats said Mr. Chadli was forced out.

The new authorities cancelled the poll, which the fundamental-

ists looked poised to win, triggering a wave of violence blamed on Muslim radicals whose party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), was outlawed last March.

Well over 600 people have been killed since a state of emergency was imposed in February 1992 and the country has been without a parliament for more than a year.

Mr. Kafi promised more talks with political parties and associations on how an unspecified period of "transition" would be handled "to favour the return to the electoral process."

"This seems to be the starting point for the whole situation. And it was not hedged round by caveats on the security situation as in the past," another diplomat said.

"But it is an absolute minimum (programme) and leaves many questions — how long the transition will be, what sort of institution will take over when this presidency steps down, how do you treat those who supported the FIS and the FFS (Socialist Forces Front)?"

The FIS was credited with over three million votes in the aborted election and the FFS, which has refused to join talks with the presidency, attracted some 500,000. Another five million out of the 13 million electorate abstained.

Mr. Kafi gave an upbeat assessment of the security situation, saying: "The escalation of terrorist acts... is being combated more and more efficiently by security forces."

Poverty is blamed by many for swelling fundamentalist ranks and Mr. Kafi warned that "real democracy" could only emerge from enduring economic development.

He repeated a pledge to move Algeria towards a free market economy, saying this would need imaginative policies, opening up to the outside world, restructured industry and competition.

"Kafi's speech suggests a three-year 'transition at least,' one of the diplomats said, adding: 'It's still a risky course.'"

Israeli absence from Palestinian festival testifies to separate identities

By Najwa Najjar-Kort
Special to the Jordan Times

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The second annual Cinema Nights of Jerusalem, which ended on May 5, was a testimony of the *de facto* separation of the Palestinian and Israeli societies, an issue at the heart of the ongoing Middle East peace talks.

"This film festival reflects a new and welcomed atmosphere, one which clearly divides Palestinians and Israelis," said Daoud Kuttab.

President of the Jerusalem Film Institute (JFI), a non-profit organisation founded in May 1991 for the promotion of film consciousness among Palestinians and sponsor of the Cinema Nights of Jerusalem.

Unlike most cultural events held in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the past, there was a noticeable lack of Israeli presence during the festival. "Even journalists were uninterested and Israeli intellectuals did not show their usual interest (in the festival)," said Mr. Kuttab.

The closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip since late March and the border restrictions were

indirect Israeli interference as these measures were responsible for low turnout rates of moviegoers in Jerusalem from the sealed off areas and from the Arab World.

Despite the effects on the festival, this Israeli security siege was considered particularly significant by Palestinians living in the occupied territories and festival sponsors. The siege, not an unusual measure Israeli adopt, was viewed in light of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's recent statements as a separation between Israelis and Palestinians.

The "borders" manned on every road leading into East Jerusalem by Israeli soldiers was further proof to Palestinians of the territorial division between the two peoples and a sign of the birth of a Palestinian state.

In response to the siege, the JFI decided to take the Cinema Nights of Jerusalem to Palestinians who could not enter Jerusalem during the festival from April 10-22. JFI members holding Jerusalem Israeli identification cards were able to travel to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to show the 33 films from ten different Arab countries between April 22 and May 5.

"In addition to breaking the security siege on our people by going to them, we also broke the cultural siege. We have been cut off from the Arab World for the past 25 years," said Mr. Kuttab. To combat the cultural blockade, the JFI decided to dedicate this year's film festival to Arab films.

The importance of showing "serious" films produced in the Arab World was stressed by JFI Artistic Director George Khleifi. "What Palestinians see on television and in video stores are cheap, commercially-made Arab films. Films that reflect the realism among Arab filmmakers are unavailable," Mr. Khleifi said.

Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, a renowned writer and art critic long before she became known as the articulate spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation, reiterated the importance of improving cinema appreciation among Palestinians at the festival's opening speech. Dr. Ashrawi said that the Palestinian cultural movement "is a reflection that the people are alive."

Screenings were made at both the Palestinian National Theatre and the Kasaba Theatre in East Jerusalem. Most of the films

shown were long feature films. Because 35mm projectors were not available, the films were projected through video. The films were divided into three categories: Classical Arab films, new Arab releases and Palestinian films.

The classical category included leading Egyptian Director Youssef Shaha's masterpiece *Al Ard* (The Land) (1965) that portrays the struggle of small Egyptian farmers against landowners and *Khaled Al Sadeeq's Bas Ya Bahr* (Cruel Sea) (1971), the first Kuwaiti film that tackles the tense relationships among people in a society that does not promise much to its young people. Also included was the screenplay of Palestinian Ghassan Kana'ani's famous novel *Men in the Sun* (1973).

Elie Suleiman, a filmmaker from Nazareth presently living in New York, was at the festival to present his film *Homage by Assassination* (1992), which was among the new release category. His film has attracted world film critics' attention because of his successful search for a new cinematic language. *Homage by Assassination* was grouped with four other works on the Gulf war

by filmmakers from Morocco, Lebanon and Tunis. These five directors were given an opportunity to express their opinions on the Gulf war and its effects on the average Arab citizen and intellectual.

Other new releases featured at the festival included Jordan's Nadjat Anzour's film *An Eastern Tale* (1991), Mohammad Malas award-winning film *The Night* (1992), Moroccan Jilali Farhatt's *The Shores of the Lost Children* (1991) and Egyptian Asma Bakri's *Beggars and Noblemen* (1991).

In addition to Mr. Suleiman, only two other directors were able to attend. Their films fell under the Palestinian film category. Hani Abu Assad from Nazareth, now living in Holland, wrote and directed his first short film *Paper House* (1992) and Alla Arsougly of Akko, now living in the United States wrote, directed and produced her own documentary, *Torn Living* (1993), ironically, local filmmaker from Beit Jala (less than five miles away from Jerusalem) Hanna Musleh, who wrote and directed the documentary *We Are God's Soldiers* (1993) was unable to attend the showing of

his film. Mr. Kuttab said that the JFI had decided to invest in this cultural event despite the internal and external obstacles, especially the meager financial and human resources, "since the only way to place ourselves on the political map in this volatile, unstable atmosphere was to act and not talk."

Mr. Kuttab said that last year's first Cinema Nights of Jerusalem, which was dedicated to Palestinian films, must have been a success, judging from the increased local interest. Its success encouraged the JFI to continue holding the festival and to undertake new projects. Recently, the JFI has embarked on training Palestinians in film and video production and producing films that are shown locally and internationally.

JFI founders hope that the Cinema Nights of Jerusalem will become a permanent feature on the city's agenda, a part which will help in making Jerusalem a cultural capital for Palestinians.

Mr. Kuttab, himself a writer, has recently returned from Jerusalem and is currently working as a filmmaker in Amman.



Various scenes from the movies shown at this year's Cinema Nights of Jerusalem festival



Police, ANC form tentative bond in S. Africa

By Judith Matloff
Reuters

PRETORIA — A white policeman affably hands a megaphone to an ANC activist calling for the end of white minority rule, an image of new, tentative cooperation between South Africa's traditional foes.

White police wrestle to the ground a white rightwinger who shot dead two black protesters. African National Congress (ANC) township officials hand over to police thugs who killed a journalist. Police and ANC organisers huddle at rallies to stop looters and rioters.

As South Africa takes halting violent steps towards multi-racial democracy, cooperation once unthinkable is emerging between the ANC government-in-waiting and its erstwhile police enemies.

The ANC still accuses the police of shooting unarmed township protesters and senior police officials question its ability to control its followers.

Since the April 10 murder of black Communist Party leader Chris Hani, the two sides have been thrown together to save the country from violent disaster. At least 80 people, most of them blacks, have been killed in violence since Mr. Hani's death.

But police and the ANC have struck delicate, unprecedented deals to ensure potentially explosive rallies were largely orderly.

"Cooperation was good," ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa said last month after police and ANC marshals working together ensured mourning ceremonies for Mr. Hani that drew tens of thousands of blacks were mainly peaceful.

"What has been played out this week is instructive — this is the embryonic stage of joint control of the security forces."

The ANC and other black anti-apartheid groups taking part in multi-party negotiations on a transition to democracy are demanding joint control over South Africa's white-led security forces along with black guerrilla groups.

The police force is 60 per cent black and the government late last year appointed its first three non-white generals.

Except for one day of urban riots and some isolated incidents, Mr. Hani's funeral and other memorial events were largely peaceful as police and ANC officials consulted to ensure white rightists did not attack protesters and township anger did not spill

out of control.

"The cooperation has been superb," said a U.N. observer in Pretoria, the seat of white power where ANC and police officials walked side by side to maintain order at a march.

At one point a white policeman lent ANC organiser Donnie Khumalo his megaphone so his supporters could hear calls for black

majority rule.

The march on police headquarters was technically banned by the city council but police said they had decided to let it go ahead to defuse tensions.

"They've been very disciplined," Colonel Royce Menton said of the ANC marshals, looking calm on as they delivered a statement at the headquarters

calling for the end of the government he serves.

"The cooperation has been exemplary, an example for the rest of the country," Mr. Khumalo agreed.

But while collaboration may be emerging on the ground, many on both sides of the old war are slow to be convinced.

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*Marriott
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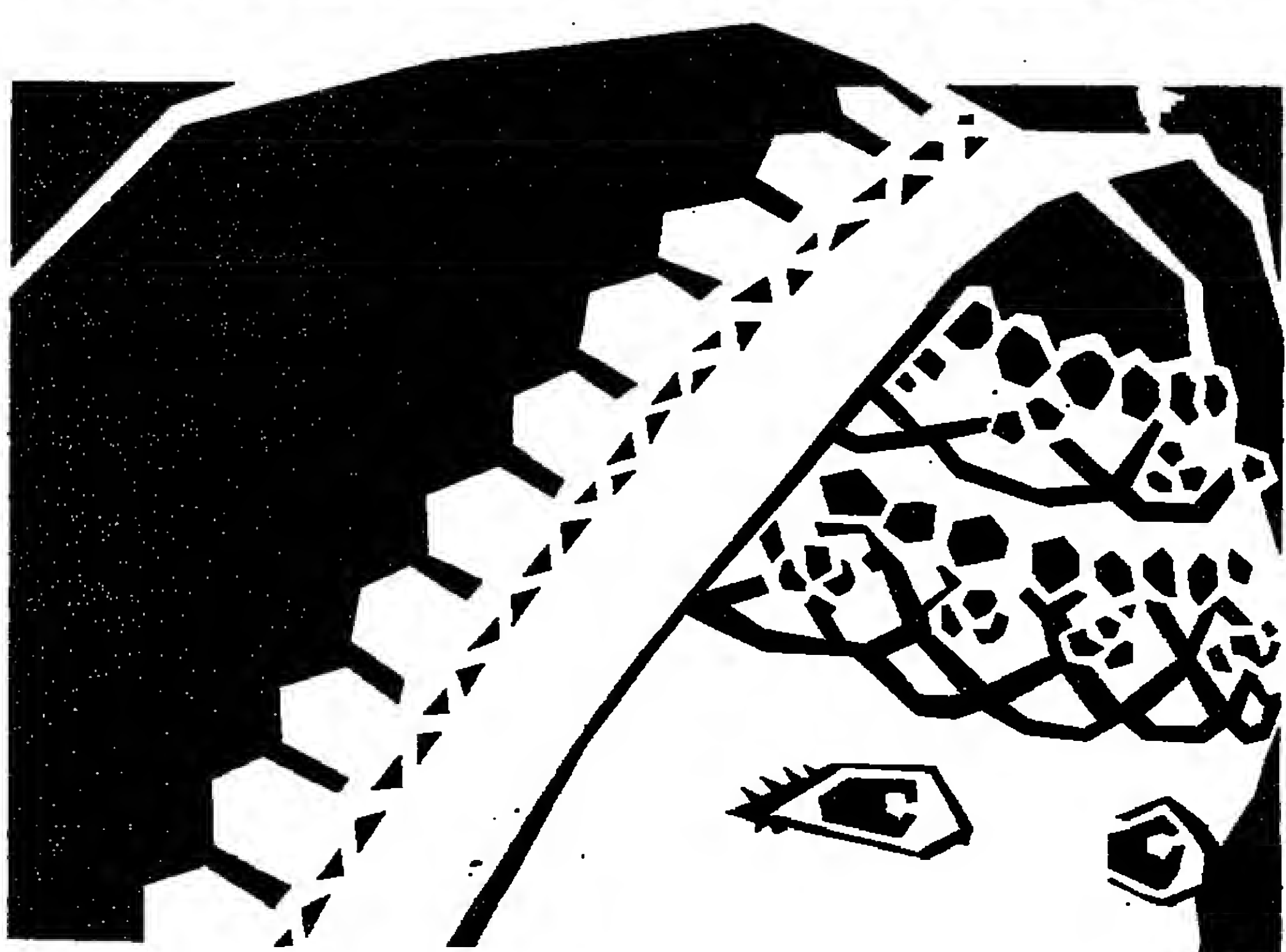
Al Rababa

If you're in for some partying, The Survivors Band and the new Belly Dancer at Al Rababa Nightclub entertain you with the latest Arabic music hits till the early hours.

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مكتبة حيدر

Computers and productivity

By Jean-Claude Elias

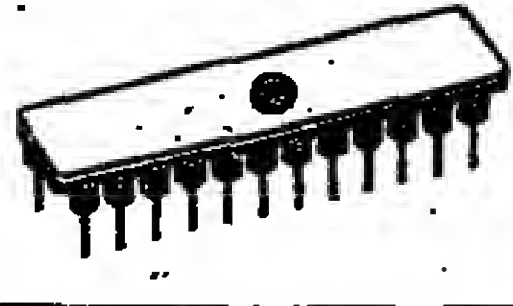
At an evening outing recently, I had a heated argument with someone I had just met and who seemed a regular reader of this column. We actually had two arguments. The first one started on the never ending IBM-compatible vs Apple-Macintosh subject but didn't last very long for we both knew we wouldn't come out with a clear winner.

The second topic was about whether computers have brought more productivity to the world. According to the information this gentleman had, the huge base of 20 million (I could not verify the number but it seems possible to me) personal computers (PC), in the United States did not increase productivity. Computers made work faster, better, created new jobs, allowed very difficult or dangerous tasks to be performed, opened new horizons in science, education and other fields but did not improve productivity at all, the gentleman added.

If someone took into consideration the real investment in even the simplest computerisation, be it personal, business or industry oriented, the figure actually could be quite high. The total cost includes the purchase of the hardware, the cost of maintaining it in good working condition and then replacing it an average of every four to five years, the regular purchase of consumables (disks, ribbons, stationery, etc...), the cost of manpower, of training and the price of software with its continuous and unavoidable updates.

Looking at computers this way makes some users wonder why they ever gave up on traditional manual work and what they got in return for their investment! The danger in discussing computer productivity is in making an under-

chip talk



standable but regrettable confusion between productivity and feasibility. Moreover, if we exclude industrial robots — they are a very special case — who said that computers had to increase productivity?

Computers help us avoid repetitive and tedious work, their calculating power is not to be proven anymore, they have also become our reliable mass memory and we already can't do without them — try to make a airline reservation or check your bank account balance when the main computer is down. By relieving us from programmed, automatic and "non-thinking" tasks, computers allow us to concentrate on other problems and issues, those that need our human intervention and decision-making capability, not always based on coldly computed data.

Discussing computer productivity is therefore not relevant. At least not as a global subject. One could study the increase in productivity in very specific and well defined cases of computerisation, but certainly not in general.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

CAPITALS

Amman

- Capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and chief industrial centre.
- Population: Approx. 1,400,000.
- Rabbath-Ammon of the Bible, and the Greek Philadelphia in the 3rd century B.C.
- Rebuilt by Ptolemy Philadelphus.
- Centre of a road network and on the Cairo-Baghdad air route.
- University of Jordan established here, 1962.
- The great influx of refugees following the war with Israel in 1948 more than quadrupled the population in the 1950s.
- Distinguished by its up-to-date, luxurious villas, orchards, parks; youth centres; modern, clean, wide macadamised roads and motorways; splendid, air-conditioned international airport; ancient ruins; tolerance and hospitality of its people.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

A TRAFFIC jam suddenly took place in Beirut. Accordingly, a physician operated on himself an appendicitomy while stationing his car in the middle of the street.

IT was the habit of the American musician, Joseph Schillinger, to compose his melodies through transforming his illustrative figures of price fluctuations into musical notes.

IN SOUTH AFRICA a man is appointed by the government to observe the movements of whales and then turns to warn the inhabitants of the area to take the necessary precautions through using his horn.

AN IRISH LASS kept on brushing her teeth for 8 hours and a half!

AN ARIZONIAN paid a \$250 fine because he rode his horse without using the head or rear lights!

HAPPY DREAMS

FASTING: A dream of fasting suggests that you need to make amends for some past injustice; get on with it; the sooner it is done the quicker you will be able to forget it.

HUNGER: A dream of being hungry may be regarded as a promise of better times ahead; to dream of others being hungry predicts money luck, possibly through an unexpected legacy.

THIRST: An obstacle dream which suggests that you are an aggressive leader. The meaning depends on whether or not you quenched your thirst. If you did so at a well or a spring, your success will be beyond your highest expectations.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

The United Nations

- The United Nations was founded in 1945 as the successor to the League Of Nations.
- In 1945, there were 51 members of the original United Nations, now more than 180 countries.
- Trygve Lie of Norway was the first Secretary-General serving from Feb 1, 1946 until April 10, 1953.

- The charter for the U.N. was drawn up in San Francisco in 1945.
- The five permanent members of the Security Council are: China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Maintaining international peace and security is one of its fundamental aims.
- Switzerland is one of the sovereign countries which is not a member of the U.N.
- Two colours are found on the flag of the U.N.: blue and white.
- Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swedish born secretary-general, was killed in an aeroplane crash in 1961.
- Lord Byron, an English poet, had referred to a United Nations in his 1816 poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.
- Dr. Boutros Ghali (Egyptian) became the U.N. secretary-general in 1992.

HUMOUR

DOCTOR: "I've examined you thoroughly and I think that all you need is a good rest."
WOMAN PATIENT: "But I feel that I need some medicine. Why don't you look at my tongue?"
DOCTOR: "That needs a rest, too."

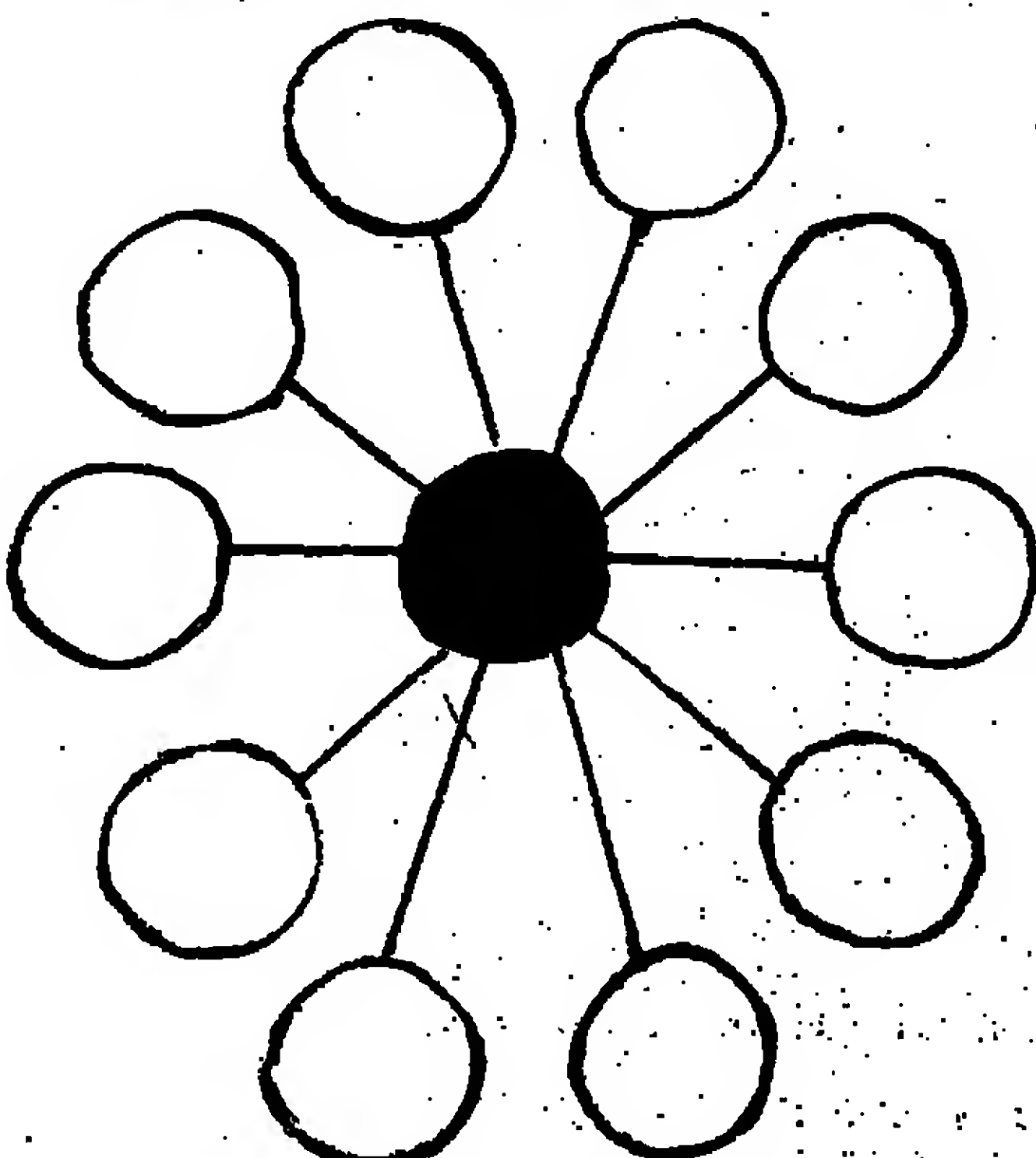
MRS. DOUBLETON: "I'm always having trouble with either my husband or the furnace."
MRS. SYMPLETON: "How's that?"
MRS. DOUBLETON: "Whenever I watch one the other goes out!"

MR. JONES: (on the phone) "Hello? Dr. Smith?"
DOCTOR: "Yes."
MR. JONES: "My wife has just dislocated her jaw. If you should be in the neighbourhood in the next couple of weeks or so maybe you'd drop in and have a look at her!"

PUZZLES

(A) ARRANGE THE NUMBERS

Can you arrange the numbers from "1" to "11" in the circles shown so that the total of the numbers along any straight line becomes the same as any other such total?



(B) DO IT QUICKLY, PLEASE

A man ate 100 grapes in five days, each day eating 6 more than on the previous day.
How many grapes did he eat on the first day?

When the sun never smiles

By E. Yaghi

Maher liked to make pictures for his teacher Salwa. Whenever conditions allowed his attending school and he had an art class, he drew with vivid colours the feelings that lived in his heart. "Well, Maher," his teacher said one spring morning when the sky was blue and all the world should have appeared green and sweet, "what are you going to draw for me today?"

The six-year-old sat and pondered and then answered. "I'll draw whatever you like, miss."

"All right then," she replied, "why don't you do a picture of a zoo?"
So he set to work amongst the other students who bent their heads close to their desks. He thought and thought and finally drew a small monkey in a cage. In the background he put an elaborate Palestinian flag with a Star of David at its centre and blood dripping from it folds. He took his crayons and coloured his picture and when his teacher passed by his desk again, he showed her his accomplishment.

She picked up his artwork and stared at the sketch and said, "Maher, I am so impressed with your work. Someday you will become a great artist. But for now, let's hang your picture on the wall so that everyone can see it."

After school, Maher ran home. He carefully slipped past the Israeli soldiers loaded with ammunition who patrolled his area and glared at him as though he had committed a crime, but he continued on his way, trying to take no notice of them. When he reached his cement house with the tin roof, he burst through the door and threw his books on the kitchen table and said to his mother who was cooking: "Hi, mommy, what's for lunch?"

"We're going to have soup. Tell me," she said, turning around to admire him, "how was your day at school? Did you have fun? Remember what I told you, always come straight home and don't throw stones?"

Boy, being an only child was really rough and having no dad made it even harder, but all he said to his doting mother was, "yes, I had fun in art class. I drew a picture of a zoo. Miss Salwa liked it and hung it up on the board. And hey, I promised you that I wouldn't throw rocks at anybody, not even if all the boys in school do, okay?"

"All right, good boy, that's my son! Go wash your hands so we can eat."

The next day, a soft rain that had started in the night, pattered on the tin roof. Maher was dressed and ready for school and was gathering his books when he asked: "Mom, does it rain in spring? I thought you said that summer was on its way and we had seen the last of this kind of weather until winter."

She tidied his shirt and answered: "That's true but maybe this year God sent us extra so that more flowers will grow."

"That reminds me. I want to take some pink roses to my art teacher. She loved them."

He deserted his books and rushed out into the small garden that his mother kept up in her lonely hours when he was away at school. Raindrops wet his face and sprinkled his clothes as he picked some roses. One thorn pricked his finger and he cried out, "ouch" and then ran back inside to let his mother tie his flowers and bandage his sore.

He told his mother good-bye and skipped to school past the soldiers. He proudly marched up to his teacher's office and knocked on the door which was slightly ajar. A voice from behind the desk said: "Come in. Hello Maher. What have you got for me today?"

"Nothing much, miss, just some roses."

She took the small bundle from him and removed the

paper that protected them. "Just what I love, roses, and pink at that." She lifted them to her nose and added: Mmmm, they smell so lovely. Thank you. I'll see you in class."

Later, after the art session started, Miss Salwa announced: "Today children. I want everyone to draw whatever you feel like and be sure to colour your work. Again, the best pictures will be hung on the board."

There was a rustle of paper, then all was quiet as all the pupils busied themselves in their own world of art. What they could not say in words, they could express in pictures. A Palestine dwelled in their hearts and occupation was a reality of their lives. Maher thought for a minute and immediately began to draw. He continued most of the period in deep concentration and used the colours he figured appropriate for the occasion. When he finished, his teacher approached him and exclaimed: "All right, let's see what you did."

Her eyes opened wide as she spoke. "Oh, Maher, this is perfect. We must hang it on the board."

She silently pinned his picture up among the others. He beamed with pride as his classmates gathered around to admire it. There it was in all its glory, the Dome of the Rock with a Palestinian flag flying from one of its sides and above it was the sun which was crying tears of blood. He had tried to capture the exquisite colours of the sacred mosque, one of the holiest Islamic shrines in the world. But the most effective of all was the morose sun who judged the tragedy of the scene below, one of occupation and oppression of an innocent people.

"That's it for today, kids. Put your things away. Tomorrow's Thursday, so enjoy your weekend. See you on Saturday, encha'llah."

As they filed out of the room, the children said good-bye. When Maher passed her, his eyes met hers. She ruffled his hair, saying: "Such a good picture. So much feeling. I hope one day the sun will smile on Palestine and we will be free."

"Me too!" he said and skipped out the door.

Outside, the rain had stopped. The sky was still cloudy and there was no sun, but there was a good fresh smell as if God had washed all the world and given it a cleaner, greener look. Maher slowed down when he neared the soldiers, eyeing them suspiciously. He walked quickly, his heart beating rapidly, feeling uncomfortable and had almost rounded the corner away from their sight when all at once, a searing pain tore through his back and then everything turned black.

He woke up in a hospital. He rubbed his eyes and then saw his mother sitting beside him, her face smudgy and looking sad. Next to her sat Miss Salwa. He tried to speak but his voice seemed lost inside his frail body. Then, somewhere he found the strength to say: "Mommy, what happened? Why am I here? Why do I have so much pain?"

His mother rose slowly and stood at the side of the bed. The scent of medicine was everywhere and overpowered him. The white sheets felt coarse and unfriendly. "You'll be all right son," his mother said unconvincedly. "Look, here's Miss Salwa. She's come to pay you a visit and talk to you about your artwork!"

There is a hope of peace as the talks between Arabs and Israelis continue, but meanwhile, the brutality and torture of a suffering people goes on: Maher was shot in the spine as he was walking home. He threw no stones. He is the only child of his widowed mother and to add to her sorrow, he will never walk again. The bullet paralysed him from the waist down. Perhaps he can draw pictures for the rest of his life and remember those days of his past when he could run and skip. What else can he do in a land where the sun never smiles?

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, May 13

8:30 Special Programme

9:10 Quantum Leap

Starring: Scott Bakula and Dean Cain

Quantum Leap is an innovative time-travel series centring on Sam Beckett whose efforts to return to present day, following a flawed experiment, keep him bouncing back and forth in time — mostly from the mid-50's through the mid-70's — replacing people he never knew or heard of. While television viewers will see Sam as he sees himself, those around him see as the person he replaced. This proves both challenging and amusing, sometimes providing high drama as the perplexed hero valiantly tries to live the life he has been forced to assume without any of the person's skills or knowledge. His partner on the Quantum Leap project, the Observer, who appears as a hologram only Sam can see or hear, guides him, but sometimes provides more problems than help.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Movie Of The Week — Absolute Strangers

Starring: Henry Winkler

Friday, May 14

8:30 ALF

9:10 E.N.G.

Scratches on a plastic wall

10:00 News In English

10:20 Wagner

Saturday, May 15

8:30 Super Bloopers And New Practical Jokes



The Good Guys Sunday at 9:10

9:00 Local Programme

9:30 Music

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Dead On The Money

A theatre star gets to know a young man, Carter, who tells her mysterious things about his family.

Sunday, May 16

8:30 Executive Stress

Anthea has a new boyfriend, Robin, who turns out to be just the sort of new writer Caroline is looking for. One of Robin's other talents, however, is for making trouble, which he does in a big way.

9:10 The Good Guys

Death At Seat

Monday, May 17

8:30 The Powers That Be

Bradley Gets Fired

9:10 Documentary — Dinosaur
A Tale Of An Egg

Only when a dinosaur's egg was discovered, did scientists come to know how complex these animals were

10:00 News In English

10:20 Jordan Weekly

10:40 Street Justice

Missing

A Vietnamese lady comes to Adam's house and asks him to find her husband who went missing in Vietnam in 1973. She believes that he is still alive.

Tuesday, May 18

8:30 Beadles About

9:10 Forever Green

Young Tom has a new friend, a Polish immigrant, who teaches Tom fishing.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — A Scent Of Autumn

Starring: Delphine Seyrig

Wednesday, May 19

8:30 Chance In A Million

Winning streak

Tom is a lucky guy. He keeps on winning prizes easily.

9:00 Local Programme

9:30 Voyager

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Gravy Train Goes East

Curtains to fall to save crumbling Covent Garden

By Jill Serjeant
Reuters

LONDON — London's Covent Garden Opera is to shut down for two years for an ambitious but essential modernisation scheme which critics fear could result in bankruptcy.

While most major European cities have rebuilt or refurbished their opera houses since 1945, the Covent Garden stage graced by superstars ranging from Maria Callas to Luciano Pavarotti is still powered by a World War I submarine engine.

Scene shifting is such a laborious process that the stage is sometimes ready only minutes before the curtain rises. Space in the white-pillared 1858 building is so cramped that dancers of the Royal Ballet have to travel across London on public transport from their rehearsal rooms to performances.

"It is not possible to do good work economically or efficiently in this beloved but increasingly decrepit 19th century theatre," said General Director Jeremy Isaacs. "It may be British to muddle through but it just isn't good enough. We need a threat that works."

Covent Garden authorities say modernisation is not only desirable but "essential if the Opera House is to continue to fulfill its mission into the 21st century."

But to carry out the work, the opera and ballet house must find £150 million (\$230 million) in finance and shut its doors in 1997 for two years before a planned reopening on New Year's Eve 1999.

It's a tall order for a state-subsidised arts company which, despite charging the highest ticket prices in the world, is already running a £3.6 million (\$5.5 million) deficit and is frequently accused of catering to an elite minority.

A report by Britain's Council last year advised the Covent Garden board to abandon the scheme which has already taken 10 years in battles with planning authorities and is turning the opera company into a property developer.

Britain's Conservative government, which last year provided subsidies of some £19 million (\$29 million) to Covent Garden, has refused to contribute extra funds for modernisation.

Covent Garden is therefore relying on raising £45 million (\$70 million) through a public appeal to be launched at the end of 1993 and an as yet undisclosed sum from Britain's new National Lottery for the Arts and Sport.

But the bulk of the funding is dependent on profits from a planned commercial development of shops and offices on part of the Covent

Garden site, a prospect which critics say is fraught with dangers given the recession and plummeting property prices.

"The climate of the commercial property market today raises questions about the likelihood of those profits being realised, as well as the effect of this uncertainty on potential donors," the Arts Council report said.

The report said that raising £45 million from the public was "a challenging target" and noted there were no concrete plans for touring by the opera and ballet companies during the closure period.

Covent Garden, however, says the danger is not so much of going bust as falling apart. It is determined to press ahead with the scheme and win the support of the vast popular audience for opera that has sprung up in Britain in the 1990s.

A new nationwide commercial radio station playing classical music highlights is a

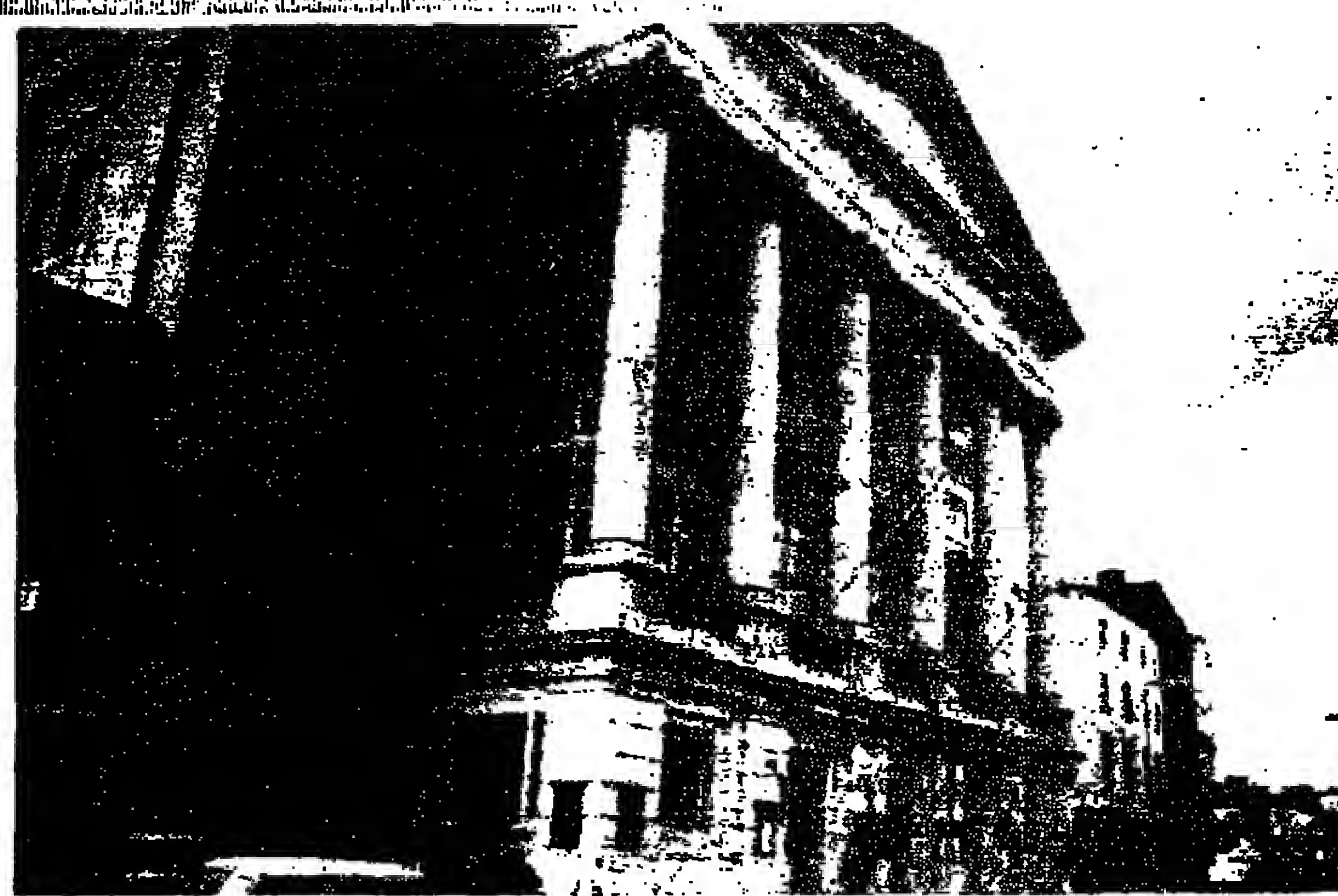
runaway success after seven months on the air and recordings by Pavarotti and Polish composer Henryk Gorecki have won new fans among pop-music lovers.

The revamped opera house will create an extra 113 seats. New technology backstage will increase the number of performances, keeping prices in check.

The best seats for productions featuring top singers currently cost about £200 (\$300) — double those at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

The Royal House Board also plans more spacious public areas, including restaurants and bars open to visitors all day.

"The Royal Opera House lives on borrowed time," it said, warning of the impending threat of closure posed by prospective European Community directives on health and safety.



London's Covent Garden Opera

The choice, it says, is simple. "A decaying theatre in Co-

vent Garden, sooner or later derelict or empty, would be a national disgrace a living theatre on this site, a source of public satisfaction and national pride."

Art world celebrates Miro centenary

By Robert Hart
Reuters

BARCELONA — Joan Miro, the Catalan artist once dubbed "the most surreal of the surrealists" is being celebrated in "Miro Year".

This month, the 100th anniversary of his birth in Barcelona, the Catalan artist once dubbed "the most surreal of the surrealists" is being celebrated in "Miro Year".

Miro, who was born in the Catalan capital on April 20, 1893, left a priceless legacy of paintings, drawings, ceramics, sculptures, posters, etchings, lithographs and tapestries when he died on Dec. 25, 90 years later.

Catalonia — the region that nurtured his talent — the rest of Spain and the art world at large are all involved in a year of events and exhibitions.

Rosa Maria Malet, coordinator of the Miro Foundation in Barcelona, described Miro

as a shy man who sought anonymity but nevertheless felt deeply immersed in society.

He was, she said, "the most universal and yet the most Catalan of artists."

"The fact is that Miro is the artist who opened most doors to all forms of expression."

Last Tuesday, Spain's Queen Sofia opened the prize event of "Miro Year", an exhibition of 180 paintings and 300 drawings.

Together, they offer a chronological scan of the artist's development from the intensely coloured, representational work of his youth to the later sparse, symbolic lines and spaces.

The Miro Foundation, organisers of one of the most extensive displays of Miro's work ever staged, with exhibits loaned by galleries, museums and private collections in Europe, the United States and Japan, expects more than 300,000 visitors before it moves to New

York's Museum of Modern Art in September.

Other exhibitions of different facets of Miro as well as conferences and seminars, are being held in Barcelona, Madrid and Majorca, where he lived for many years.

At a gala inauguration, thousands of invited guests queued for hours for admission to the foundation's gallery on Montjuic Hill, with panoramic views of Barcelona.

Musicians seated around the floodlit roof of the building and on the lawns, followed the baton of composer Carlos Santos on television monitors as he conducted specially written music from a parapet overlooking the city.

Malet said the exhibition has two aims: "To present the key works in Miro's development and to show his method of working."

She said the foundation's own collection of more than 5,000 sketches and preparatory drawings showed that Miro's greatest works, some-

times seen as spontaneous and almost childlike, were in fact the result of complex thought and reworking.

The exhibition begins with vibrant oils of landscapes around Mont-Roig, in Tarragona province, where Miro's parents had a small farm.

The culmination of his figurative phase came with "La Masia" (The Farm), painted in 1922, which he described as "a resume of my life in the country" and which contains the main themes of the young Miro — landscape, sun, household implements and minute movements of nature, all depicted in intense colours.

In 1924 Miro signed the first surrealist manifesto, drawn up by French writer Andre Breton, and began his first surrealist painting, "The Carnival of Harlequin", a crowded patchwork of symbols which startled even the surrealists.

Miro later confessed the picture was in part the product of hallucinations caused by hunger. Breton called Miro "the most surreal of the surrealists" while American playwright Edward Albee wrote: "From the surrealist root, Miro produced a flower of singular beauty, even surpassing the original impetus."

In 1929 Miro broke with surrealism and declared he wanted to "assassinate" painting, which he felt had lost its way.

This rebellion led him to try other techniques such as drawing, pastels, collage and three-dimensional formats, culminating in a series of "paintings from a collage" in 1933.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 drove Miro to produce the dramatic poster "Aidez Espagne" (Help Spain).

He also turned back to representational painting, notably "Still Life With Old Shoe" (1937), which he himself described as "with the farm, the foremost piece in

my oeuvre, which I hope however to surpass later on."

World War II saw Miro painting to escape from the hostile environment around him and moving again to a more poetic style featuring the interplay of symbolic forms and space.

"I purposely became wrapped up in myself. Night, music and the stars began to play a more important role in suggesting paintings to me," he wrote from a Normandy village where he began a series of 23 gouaches entitled "Constellations."

Miro's later work was sparse and uncluttered, with lines and forms in black and primary colours on simple backgrounds.

Of the triptych "Mural Painting For A Temple", completed in 1962, he said: "By limiting myself to a few lines I have tried to give the gesture such an individual quality that it is almost anonymous — like a universal act."

Asian star tries to make it big in Hollywood

By Ernest Sander
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Tran Quang describes himself as a combination of Sylvester Stallone, Marlon Brando and Michael Douglas. Even in real life, the former Vietnamese screen star's expression can be brooding. A scar hints at scuffles, while an ever-smoldering cigarette dangles from his mouth.

But despite performing in 40-plus Vietnamese films and television shows and developing a significant following in his country, the closest he's gotten to a U.S. movie set is two auditions.

"If my wish comes true, I can learn how to make a movie in Hollywood," said Quang.

Quang is plainly enamored of Hollywood. He has seen Gone With the Wind 13 times — his thin mustache was inspired by Clark Gable — and he greatly admires Brando in On The Waterfront.

His career as a leading man began in 1968 at age 24 and led to four Vietnamese Actor of the Year Awards. Then the Communists took over in 1975 and banned him from acting.

Four years later, they decided to let Quang appear in movies again. But he had decided to leave the country.

In 11 years, he tried to escape 32 times, each time doomed by unreliable boats or captains afraid of reprisals for helping a celebrity flee the country. Three times, Quang said, he wound up in prison.

Now he's finally out — he arrived in Westminster, a city about 48 kilometres south of Los Angeles in February 1992 — yet the glory days remain distant.

"We have so many South East Asian or Asian actors or aspiring actors already. There is no very promising place for him to start with the casting offices in Hollywood," said Yen Do, the publisher of the largest Vietnamese newspaper outside of Vietnam, the Ng Uoi Viet in Westminster.

Still, Quang clings to the hope that he'll win a few parts in Hollywood and somehow pick up enough movie-making secrets to direct his own film back in Vietnam.

While pursuing his acting career, Quang served in the South Vietnamese army, often alongside Americans. The war story, he said, has yet to be told from the South Vietnamese perspective.

"I need to do something to tell the world why Americans died for our country, not like movies I've seen where they are fighting for nothing," Quang said. "Because I know, I've been with them."

ate with them. I slept with them. I played around with them. I'll show how they shared their food, how they helped our women and children. I love them so much. I have to do something."

The 49-year-old Quang never learned even the most basic directing techniques — not all that surprising in a country where the cameras are "literally from the '50s" and the majority of films are shot on videotape, as film expert Jeff Gilmore put it.

Eventually, Quang said, he would like to bring the Vietnamese film industry into the modern age.

Gilmore, head of programming for UCLA Film and Television Archives and director of the Sudanese Film Festival, recounted a recent visit to the United States by a group of Vietnamese film executives, illustrating the country's technology gap.

"They bought video cameras here to take back. We're talking about the guys who are running the film industry," he said.

Quang's films such as The Wild Horse, Mission 709 and Like An Evening Dewdrop are highly regarded by the Vietnamese — each won Quang a Best-actor Award in the early '70s — but few have even heard of the movies, much less seen them.

"There are very few possibilities for films to be shown outside the country," said Gilmore, who was last in Vietnam five years ago.

As he hopes for a nibble from Hollywood, Quang is teaching at an acting school he set up with his manager and second wife, My-Ha Ho.

She immigrated to the United States in 1975, and in a 1990 visit to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) bumped into Quang in a nightclub. The two, who once dated, had not seen each other in 15 years but reprised their affair.

As Quang's fiancée, she petitioned the U.S. government and was able to get approval for Quang to leave Vietnam.

Various members of Quang's family, including his children from a previous marriage, mother and father, live in the Orange County area, which has a sizable Vietnamese immigrant population.

At the Tet Festival in Westminster this year, heads occasionally turned toward Quang. One man darted out and stopped him, clutching Quang's arm. Behind him, the man's wife and her friends stood grinning, their cameras ready to capture the moment.

"I know him because he is a movie star," 41-year-old Tran Ba said. "This (is) the first time ever to see him."

Chinese cinema celebrated abroad but troubled at home

By Philippe Massonnet
Agence France Press

PEKING — Awards at major festivals, enthusiasm among filmmakers and another Chen Kaige entry this year at Cannes: The foreign love affair with Chinese cinema is attaining new heights.

But it is a different scenario at home.

"It has been a long time since the lines in front of our cinemas disappeared," the venerable filmmaker Xie Jin complained bitterly last year during a meeting with propaganda chiefs for the ruling

Communist Party.

The statistics more than back up that observation, underlining a free fall in movie attendance.

Admissions to less glamorous cinemas plunged from 2.7 billion in 1987 to 1.7 billion in 1989 and continued falling to just 1.1 billion entries in 1991, the last year for which figures are available.

But the Film Ministry admits the decline continued in 1992 and will not be turned around this year.

The disaffection of a formerly loyal audience is blamed on a number of fac-

tors, not least intensive competition from television of the sort which rocked Hollywood in the 1950s.

Also, younger Chinese in particular, are now offered a much wider selection of entertainment — including karaoke, pop and rock concerns, and more appealing books and magazines.

But for one of China's most celebrated directors, Chen Kaige, it is more simple.

"It's a problem of the quality of the films," says Chen, whose Farewell To My Concubine has been chosen as an

official selection at the 46th Cannes Film Festival, which opens Thursday. It will be his third entry in the glamorous competition in five years.

As the young independent filmmaker Zhang Yuan sees it, there are too few such gems.

"There were 10 strong films last year among 160 products," said the recognised leader of China's cinema avant garde.

And foreign recognition can have its perils: many Chinese critics makers of internationally acclaimed films, such as Zhang Yimou,

director of Raise The Red Lantern and The Story Of Qiu Ju, for making movies aimed at Western audiences.

Another factor turning off film buffs is the flood of films with heavily ideological messages which followed the tighter controls on ideology introduced after the crushing of the democracy movement in 1989.

But there is more to the crisis in Chinese cinema than disenchantment among audiences "now more preoccupied by the money than by culture," as the editor of one cultural magazine put it.

The state's decision that from the beginning of 1993 the making of films would be decided by the market, in contrast to the past, when productions were subsidised and officials looked after distribution, has had a dramatic effect on production.

For the first time in Chinese cinematic history, there was no filming of major feature films this year until April.

"With economic reform and the state's financial disengagement, the studios don't want to take any risks," said Zhang Yuan.

A voice from the land of the Vikings

By Verena Dobnik
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kristjan Johannsson started out as a diesel mechanic in a small Icelandic town. But once his rare vocal talent was recognised, he concentrated on performing operatic tunes rather than engine tuneups.

Now a world-class tenor, the 40-year-old Johannsson made his Metropolitan Opera debut on Feb. 20, the first Icelandic to sing leading roles at the venerable opera house.

It's a long way from Akureyri — a town of 16,000 at the edge of the Arctic Circle where he first performed at age 8, singing O Holy Night in a Santa Claus suit.

At a time when opera houses sorely need dramatic tenors, this blond, dark-eyed singer with the Viking blood of his ancestors is a vocal powerhouse.

"When doctors look into my throat, they say, 'what the

hell is this?'" Johannsson said with a laugh. "They can't tell if I'm a baritone, a bass or a tenor."

With vocal chords as long and thick as ones that usually produce the lower male registers, the stocky Johannsson pierces the 3,800-seat Metropolitan with his high notes.

This year, his career is one long high C.

He made his Met debut as the Spanish troubadour-lover Manrico in Giuseppe Verdi's "Il Trovatore" — without a single stage rehearsal to test his voice in the hall.

"They do that to save money. ... But I was a little worried, a little hysterical," he said, half-joking.

It was a baptism by live audience. "I just stood there, and the curtain opened. And I said to myself, 'wow!'"

So did the audience.

In March, billed with tenor Placido Domingo, Johannsson sang the role of the fickle Sicilian lover Turiddu in Pietro Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana." For the second half of the evening, Domingo was the love-torn,

tragic clown in Ruggiero Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci."

Domingo received a roaring ovation. Johannsson brought down the house.

With two of the superstar tenors, Luciano Pavarotti and Domingo, in their 50s, and the third, Jose Carreras, performing less after surviving leukemia, Johannsson is well on his way to becoming the next great tenor.

He will sing Verdi's "Aida" for the September opening night of the Vienna State Opera — a great accolade. He also will start the season at Chicago's Lyric Opera with a new production of Giacomo Puccini's "Tosca." And in July, Johannsson and Domingo are to appear together again in Verona, Italy, to open the prestigious summer festival at the ancient Roman arena there.

Johannsson may be new to the stratosphere of the international opera world — dominated by no more than a dozen stars — but he's worked hard for 15 years to reach the top.

Singing runs in his family. His father, a psychiatric nurse, was an amateur tenor who starred in musicals and operettas in Akureyri's little theatre.

Along with four brothers and two sisters, Johannsson remembered, "I kind of grew up in the mental hospital" next door to their home, playing soccer and chatting with the patients.

He wanted to become a goldsmith, like his grandfather. But the master artisan "was not a businessman." He would repair one or another woman's jewelry free of charge, then "could hardly buy the meat" to feed his family.

When Johannsson asked to learn his craft, the grandfather said, "No. You can't live on this."

His father, who was getting only "a small salary" for his singing, told him, "why should you go to sing? It's nuts."

So at age 20, Johannsson became a mechanic. He opened his own garage; re-

pairing and tuning Diesel engines in trucks, cars, boats and tractors.

For fun, he sang with a chorus conducted by the Italian Vincenzo Maria Demetz. One day, Demetz picked up an especially fine sound coming from the chorus — Johannsson's voice.

He pulled the young man aside, and said: "It would be a shame for the world if you don't go to study. You have a great voice."

At 24, Johannsson left Iceland and moved to Piacenza, Italy, to study singing.

Three years later, the fledgling tenor made his debut in Puccini's "La Boheme" in Reykjavik, Iceland's capital. His 1984 U.S. debut in Columbus, Ohio, was followed by nearly a decade of performances in other American cities, in Italian opera houses — including Milan's La Scala — and in Great Britain, Germany and Japan.

One major stage remains to be conquered — London's Covent Garden where he will sing in 1994.

Johannsson and his wife, actress Jona Sverrisdottir, have two sons, Sverrir, 5, and Vikkingur, 3. The family shuttles between their house on Lake Garda, east of Milan, and their apartment in Monte Carlo.

Ms. Sverrisdottir, who sat with her husband during an interview at the Met, coaches the tenor on his acting.

"I go to the rehearsals, and I can see when he wants to do some movement, but he kills it," she said.

The boys' names are typical of Iceland, an island in the North Atlantic with 250,000 people, 2 million sheep and a millennium-long history of Nordic sagas, Danish rule and independence in 1944.

While revelling in Italian melodies, Johannsson has not forgotten the music of his motherland. His most recent recording is devoted to Icelandic songs, accompanied by a London orchestra.

It was a hit back home — where every fourth Icelandic family owns one, Johannsson said proudly.

Study suggests moderate drinking raises risk of breast cancer

By Paul Reecer
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two alcoholic drinks a day are enough to raise hormone levels in women and put them at greater risk of developing breast cancer, according to a study at the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

The research provides a possible reason that other studies have shown an increase of breast cancer among women who drink, said Marsha E. Reichman, who did the research while at the National Cancer Institute.

Diet and disease research over the last 10 years have shown that women who drink

moderately have a breast cancer risk that is 40 to 100 per cent greater than women who don't drink. Other studies have associated estrogen, a hormone, with breast cancer.

Dr. Reichman said the new study is the first to provide a link between the earlier findings.

"This is the first study to suggest that the mechanism by which alcohol affects breast cancer risk may be the increase in hormones caused by alcohol," she said.

A report on the study was published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

Ironically, the study comes

soon after Boston researchers reported that three drinks a day may reduce the risk of heart attacks by up to 50 per cent.

The studies reflect an effort by biological scientists to relate the chemistry of diet to disease. Other studies have shown that conditions such as heart disease, cancer and stroke are linked to dietary habits in some people.

In the breast cancer study, one of Dr. Reichman's co-authors, Joseph T. Judd, said the goal of his field is to determine precisely how different chemicals influence the risk of disease. Eventually, he said, science may hit on the perfect diet that will enable people to avoid disease-

causing eating habits.

"We are far from knowing the whole story on diet and disease now," said Dr. Judd, a scientist at the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Centre of the Department of Agriculture.

In the study, 34 women were divided into two groups and tested for effects of alcohol through six menstrual cycles. Throughout the study, the women were on controlled diets so that the only dietary difference was the alcohol. Blood and urine tests were taken for three days during three phases of the menstrual cycle.

For half of the study, one group of women were given

nightly 30 grammes of pure grain alcohol mixed in orange juice. The other group was given orange juice without the alcohol. For the second half of the study, the groups reversed their alcohol use. In this way, both halves of the study group received the alcohol dose for three menstrual cycles.

Blood tests showed increases in Estrogen of up to 31.9 per cent during the middle phase of the menstrual cycle, the peri-ovulatory phase, for women who were drinking. Urine tests showed a similar increase in Estrogen excreted during the luteal, or final, phase of the menstrual cycle for those on alcohol. Little change was found in the ear-

ly, or follicular, part of the cycle.

In an editorial published with the study, Dr. Matthew P. Longnecker of the UCLA School of Public Health said the findings may not be relevant to most women since studies have shown that fewer than 3 per cent of American women drink 30 grammes of alcohol daily.

Dr. Judd said that the alcohol used was pure, or 200 proof. He said that 30 grammes of the beverage is approximately equal to the amount of alcohol used in two "very strong" mixed drinks, such as Martinis.

Both Dr. Judd and Dr. Reichman said that more study is

needed before they could make a recommendation on the use of alcohol. They said alcohol, as with other parts of the human diet, affects people differently and affects parts of the body differently.

For instance, Dr. Judd said the women in the new study were also tested for cholesterol levels. Those drinking the alcohol, he said, were found to have higher levels of High Density Lipoprotein, the so-called "good" cholesterol that is thought to combat heart disease. Similar results were reported over the weekend in a study by a group of Boston researchers.

In making dietary decisions based on what is now known,

said Dr. Judd, "people have to consider overall risk factors for disease."

Women who have high risk factors for breast cancer, he said, could consider avoiding alcohol since the beverage clearly aggravates the risk. Among the known breast cancer risks are a family history of the disease and certain types of breast cysts.

Dr. Judd said that for people at high risk of heart disease, moderate alcohol use could help reach a blood chemistry that benefits the heart.

"People have to consider all of the overall risk factors, such as family history, in making decisions about alcohol use," he said.

Doctors probe disease in children of mothers with breast implants

By Paul Raeburn
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Symptoms of unusual immune disorders have been found in children of mothers with breast implants, raising questions about whether silicone might be contaminating breast milk or seeping into the womb, doctors said.

Only a few cases have so far been examined, and doctors are reluctant to draw any connection. But at least two

doctors have begun studies of the children, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been monitoring the situation.

"It would be unfair to the women to say this is definitely a problem, or not a problem," said Dr. Jeremiah Levine of Schneider Children's Hospital in New Hyde Park, N.Y., because the evidence is too preliminary. Nevertheless, he said, "there's reason to be con-

cerned and there's reason to look at it a bit better."

Dr. Levine, a pediatric gastroenterologist, said he has examined a dozen children of mothers with implants. "I saw several children who had intestinal complaints," he said.

When he examined them, he found an unusual collection of symptoms that could be characteristic of immune disorders. "Then, looking back in the history, the only thing that was unusual was

that the mothers had implants," he said.

Dr. M. Eric Gershwin of the University of California, Davis, also is studying what seems to be symptoms of immune disorders in children of mothers with implants.

"We are currently seeing children who perhaps have had some problems relating to their mother's implants," said Dr. Gershwin, chief of rheumatology, allergy and clinical immunology.

Neither Dr. Levine nor Dr. Gershwin would elaborate on their studies, saying it was too early to draw any conclusions.

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) restricted sales of silicone breast implants to women needing breast reconstruction or to those participating in experimental trials of the implants.

One of the FDA's concerns was that breast implants might be somehow disrupting

the body's immune system, triggering a reaction that could lead to disease.

In March, the Dow Corning Corp., developer of silicone breast implants, reported that the silicone gel in the implants altered the immune systems of laboratory rats. Studies to determine the effect of implants on the human system are under way at Dow Corning and elsewhere.

In a statement, Dow Cor-

ning said "there is presently no convincing scientific evidence" to show that breast implants cause disease in women or children nursed by mothers with breast implants.

The company said it had done one study to look for silicone in breast milk of mothers with implants but didn't find any. Dow Corning stopped making breast implants in March 1992.

Working with a patient advocacy group, Dr. Levine

has distributed a questionnaire to women with implants in an effort to determine how widespread the problem might be.

Susan Cruzan, an FDA spokeswoman, said the agency had reviewed the survey. FDA officials are aware of the reports of health problems in the children, she said.

Dow Corning said 5,400 lawsuits have been filed against the company in connection with breast implants.

Eyes zapped, implanted with pellets in fight against blindness

By Lee Siegel
The Associated Press

UNIVERSAL CITY, California — A vaccine, drug pellets and laser-zapped fat bubbles show promise for preventing blindness caused by herpes, AIDS and diseases

that kill the eye's light-sensing cells, scientists said.

The vaccine to prevent repeated herpes eye infections and fatty bubbles that deliver sight-saving drugs might be widely available in five years, experts said at a seminar sponsored by the fund-raising

charity Research to Prevent Blindness.

Implanted medicine pellets already have saved the sight of dozens of AIDS patients, and should be in common use in two years.

Dr. Anthony Nesburn is trying to develop a vaccine

that would be injected near the eye to prevent repeated bouts of herpes eye infections in people who already carry the viruses.

Herpes eye infections scar the cornea, the clear front part of the eye. About 500,000 Americans per year

get such infections. Roughly 5,000 go blind in at least one eye, said Dr. Nesburn, a UCLA professor who directs ophthalmology research at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in Los Angeles.

Existing antiviral drugs haven't been proven effective.

So Dr. Nesburn tested an experimental herpes vaccine on rabbits. He found it reduced repeated herpes eye infections by half to two-thirds when combined with a drug that boosts the immune system.

Dr. Nesburn said he hopes

that a more effective vaccine can be tested on people in three years and widely available two years later, perhaps in the form of eye drops instead of injections.

Dr. Jay S. Duker of Boston's New England Eye Centre showed how AIDS patients can avoid blindness by using small, dot-shaped, drug-filled pellets that are surgically implanted in the eyes. The procedure takes 20 minutes.

Dr. Duker reported last year that repeated bouts of AIDS-related Cytomegalovirus Retinitis — a blinding condition — were prevented in 90 per cent of 30 patients implanted with the plastic-covered pellets, which slowly released the drug Ganciclovir for either four or eight months.

Researchers now have tried the eight-month pellets in another 28 patients, and found they were 93 per cent effective, Dr. Duker said.

The pellets keep the drug in the eye, where it is needed, and out of the blood, where it can cause potentially deadly anemia when given intravenously.

The pellets are cheaper and more convenient than getting intravenous infusions

of Ganciclovir for a few hours every day, Dr. Duker said.

Physician Ran Zeimer of the University of Illinois at Chicago said his team was using laser beams and microscopically fatty bubbles to deliver drugs to the hard-to-reach retina, at the back of the eye, to treat diseases such as macular degeneration. The disease, which destroys light-sensing cells in the retina, is the leading cause of blindness in people over 50 in developed nations.

The method involves injections of dye- or drug-filled liposomes, which are microscopic bubbles made of fatty substances called lipids. The bubbles flow through the bloodstream without releasing their contents. When doctors shine a laser onto the retina, the beam makes fatty bubbles that have reached the retina heat up and burst, releasing their cargo.

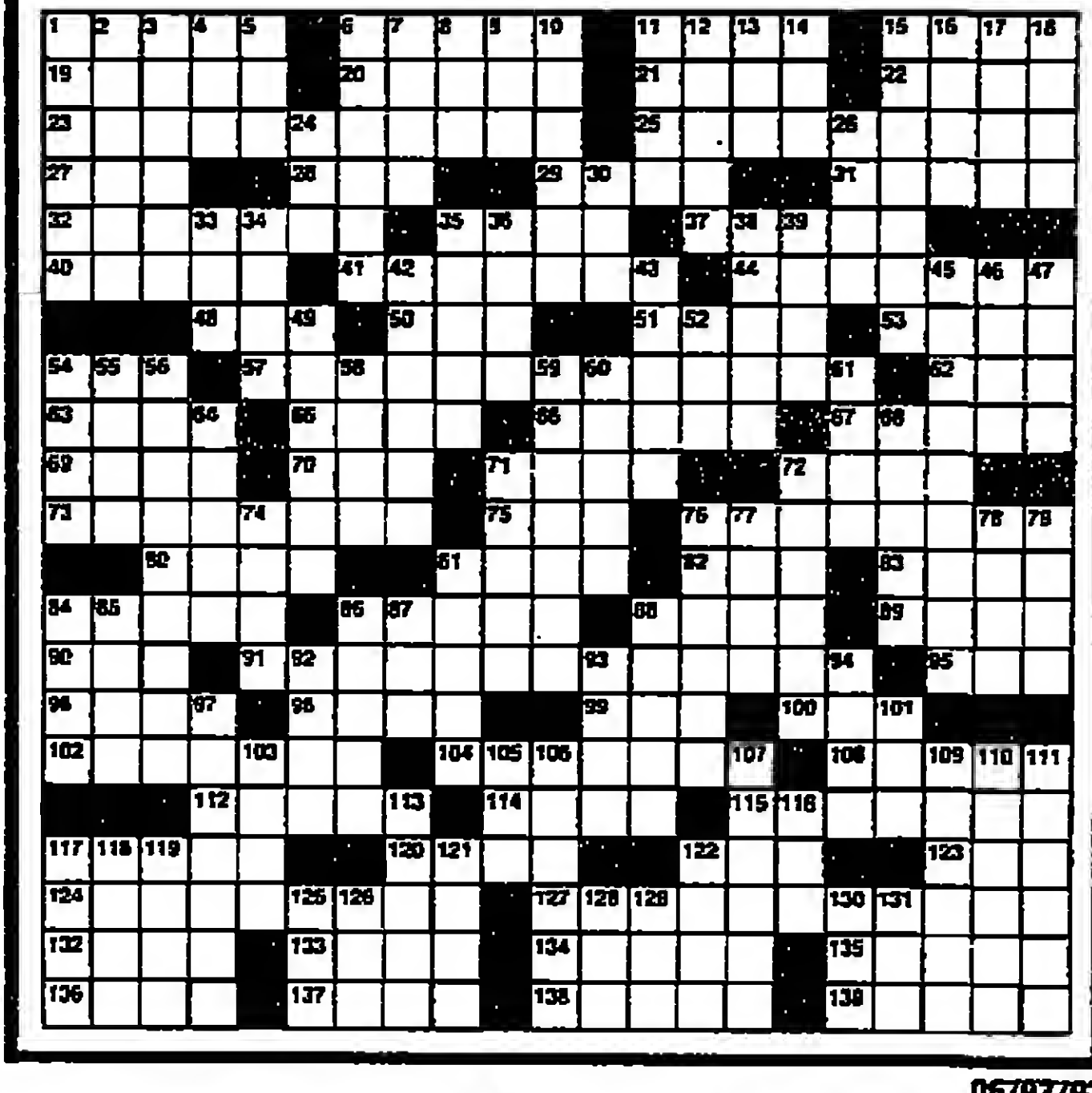
Lasers already are used to treat macular degeneration by zapping the offending vessels. But that kind of laser does some damage that leaves patients with blind spots, a problem that Dr. Zeimer believes will be avoided with the new technique.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

DOUBLES
By Thomas W. Schier

ACROSS
1 Wide open
2 Writer's pain
3 Vessel
11 Political cartoonist
18 Fat Thai Jazz
20 Western
21 Top-drawer
22 Hottel West
23 Mrs. Arnez
24 Former Steeler
25 Catcher
26 Woman's secret
27 Dawn goddess
28 Israeli airline
31 — up (reflexive)
32 Cool flavoring
33 Actress Diana
37 Finnish lake
40 Murphy of '48
41 Knots the score
42 Rise
43 Sandy's word
50 Knock, once
51 Crow responses
52 A slaughter
54 Evergreen
57 Kudos
58 Musical refrain
59 Creator
60 On the Caspian
61 Porro's
62 Vowel display
63 Not — in the world
64 Three lines
65 Regal
67 Army NCO
68 Overlaid
69 Sanford and Son actor

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DOWN
1 Bazing
2 Exploded
3 Slope upward
4 Greek letter
5 Charged swimmer
6 Cooking style
7 Burglarizes
8 Delta city
9 Brook's
10 Geneva
11 Room in a casa
12 According to —
13 Stopover
14 Female swan
15 Current trend
16 Mine
17 Geometric term
18 Lean towards
19 Zebra name
20 Angry
21 Baton Rouge school letters
33 Aunt in Seniors
34 Trumpeter Albert
35 Proximity
36 The — love
37 Indian streamer
38 In addition to
39 Whirlwind
40 Set firmly
41 Name in opera
42 Excursion
43 Boatman
44 Room in a casa
45 According to —
46 Stopover
47 Female swan
48 Current trend
49 Mine
50 Geometric term
51 Lean towards
52 Zebra name
53 Angry
54 Baton Rouge school letters

75 — loss for words
76 "Exodus" actor
80 Cabbage dish
81 Kind of pickle
82 NYC subway
83 Not close
84 Desert hauler
85 Musical refrain
86 Emirate
87 "At — why not take" (song)
88 "Must Be Him" singer
89 CIA director, once
90 Neenan Nashese
91 City in Italy
92 Dry, wine wine
93 Sister Lenny
94 Like a desert
95 Hopalong Cassidy
96 Remove
97 As a mouse
98 Plume source
100 Opposed
101 Near grade
102 Haunted
103 Some steaks
104 Marktplatz
105 Cow Kelly
106 Twits
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111 Twits
112 Twits
113 Twits
114 Twits
115 Twits
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160 Twits

Diagramless 19 x 19, by James Barrick

ACROSS
1 miter
2 Period of prosperity
3 Clergyman running a parish
4 Glue
11 Curly fellow
12 — of the land (disposition)
14 Tam or bet
17 Substrate
20 Not at all excited
23 Asian servant
24 Kind of food
25 Kind of leather
26 Gingham
27 Hopping
28 Office gadget
29 Kin of a hummer
30 Kind of a race
31 Make as profit
32 Suet
34 Alias
35 Engage in commerce
36 Crosspatch
37 Small branch
38 Give silent aspect
39 Grows in Brooklyn
40 Plank
41 Quack
42 Quack
43 Scottish
44 Highlander
45 Endavor
50 Painful
51 Essential
52 Expert
53 Triumphed
54 Look at suggestively
55 Consumes
56 Watch part
57 Nascent
58 "It is a tale — by"

54 Ending for gang or young
55 Trial
56 Without company
57 Last British letter
58 Regret
59 Soft, sub.
60 Speed up
61 Garment maker
62 Follow secretly
63 Pung
64 Ending for gang or young
65 Trial
66 Without company
67 Last British letter
68 Regret
69 Soft, sub.
70 Speed up
71 Garment maker
72 Follow secretly
73 Pung

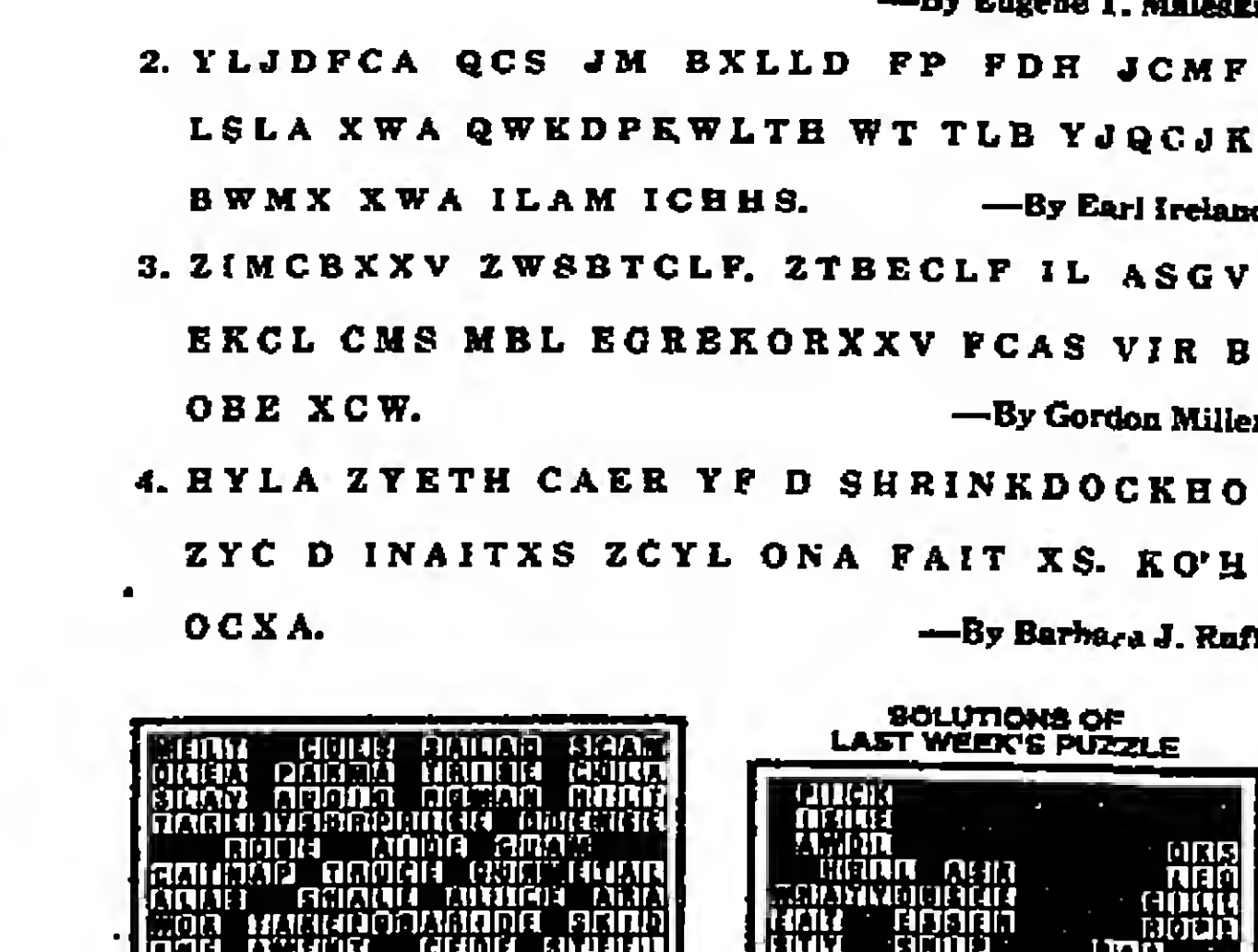
DOWN
1 Under the covers
2 Ness
3 Speck
4 Biblical prophet
5 Floating platform
6 Initiated
7 Direction indicator
10 Gave the once-over
11 Extraordinary
12 Unreturnable serve
24 Nuts and bolts
25 Artificial
26 Extensive
27 A Ford
28 Grows in Brooklyn
29 Plank
30 Quack
31 Quack
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CRYPTOGRAMS
1. NGROTUN FANDANGO CYE SGTNF "JEDRF"
— CRU ATF RKSAYINO DNYDN GNXPTE
SPIXIE PCNO LATIN LYIZ ZNPFF.
—By Eugene T. Malaska
2. YLJDFCA QCS JM BXLLD FP FDH JCMF
LSLA XWA QWEDPKWLTH WT TLE YJQCK
BWMX XWA ILAM ICHBS.
—By Earl Ireland
3. ZIMCBXXV ZWSBTCLE ZTBECLE IASGV
ERCL CMS MBL EGRKORXXV PCAS VIR B
OBE XCW.
—By Gordon Miller
4. HYLZ ZYETH CAER YF D SHRINKDOCKHO
ZYC D INATXS ZCYL ONA FAIT XS. KOH
OCXA.
—By Barbara J. Raff



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Leprosy rates rising in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (APF)

Mario de Brito, a 75-year-old peasant from northeastern Brazil, arrived in the Jacarepaga Leper Colony outside of Rio de Janeiro in 1955 and has never left.

"Since they disowned me, I quit seeing my family, even my first wife. I don't need them," Mr. De Brito said from his wheelchair.

Mr. De Brito, who has lost both legs and one arm, is one of about 250,000 sufferers of Hansen's disease, as leprosy is known, tallied by the Brazilian government.

But the rate of new cases doubled between 1986 and 1991, and doctors worry that the real number of cases could be double the official figure.

Brazil Health Ministry spokesman Doctor Celio Mota says more is being done to fight AIDS than leprosy. "The taboo illness still ravages Brazil, but only the lowest social classes," he said.

Leprosy is caused by a bacteria that destroys nerve endings and numbs the skin, leaving sufferers open to the disfiguring injuries that have come to represent the disease. Poor living conditions are a factor in its development.

Thirty-thousand new cases were reported in 1990 and 1991, most in northeast Brazil where living conditions are the worst and, experts say, official figures the least reliable.

"It is too early to know if the new alarming statistics mean an actual increase in the number of patients, or better diagnoses, or both at the same time," said Dr. Mota.

The Jacarepaga Colony was founded in 1922 by a rich baron whose daughter suffered from the ailment. Set on tens of thousands of hectares, the colony is home to 760 patients and their families for a total of 1,800

people.

There are three buildings for men, one for women and one for elderly couples. The youngest residents live in small homes on tree-shaded lanes.

While living there, Mario de Brito married a second wife, Raimunda Jarim, now 73. Last year, they were given a small apartment where a nun comes daily to help them clean-up.

"Before we lived in a little house but they forced us to give it to a young couple under the pretext that we needed help bathing," said Jarim, who moves with difficulty on feet reduced to stumps.

"Before they were isolated, today the food and housing attracts healthy people from outside," said colony director Francisco Mota, 47, a former patient who arrived in 1975.

"Quarantine of lepers has not been obligatory in Brazil since 1985 but patients refuse to leave. Here, the state supports them, on the outside they would be forced to become beggars," he added.

Since 1991, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Brazil have been working on a national leprosy campaign to better inform doctors about the disease.

Two weeks after the treatment starts, the patient is no longer contagious. A cure takes six months to two years. Patients need annual follow-up examinations for five years.

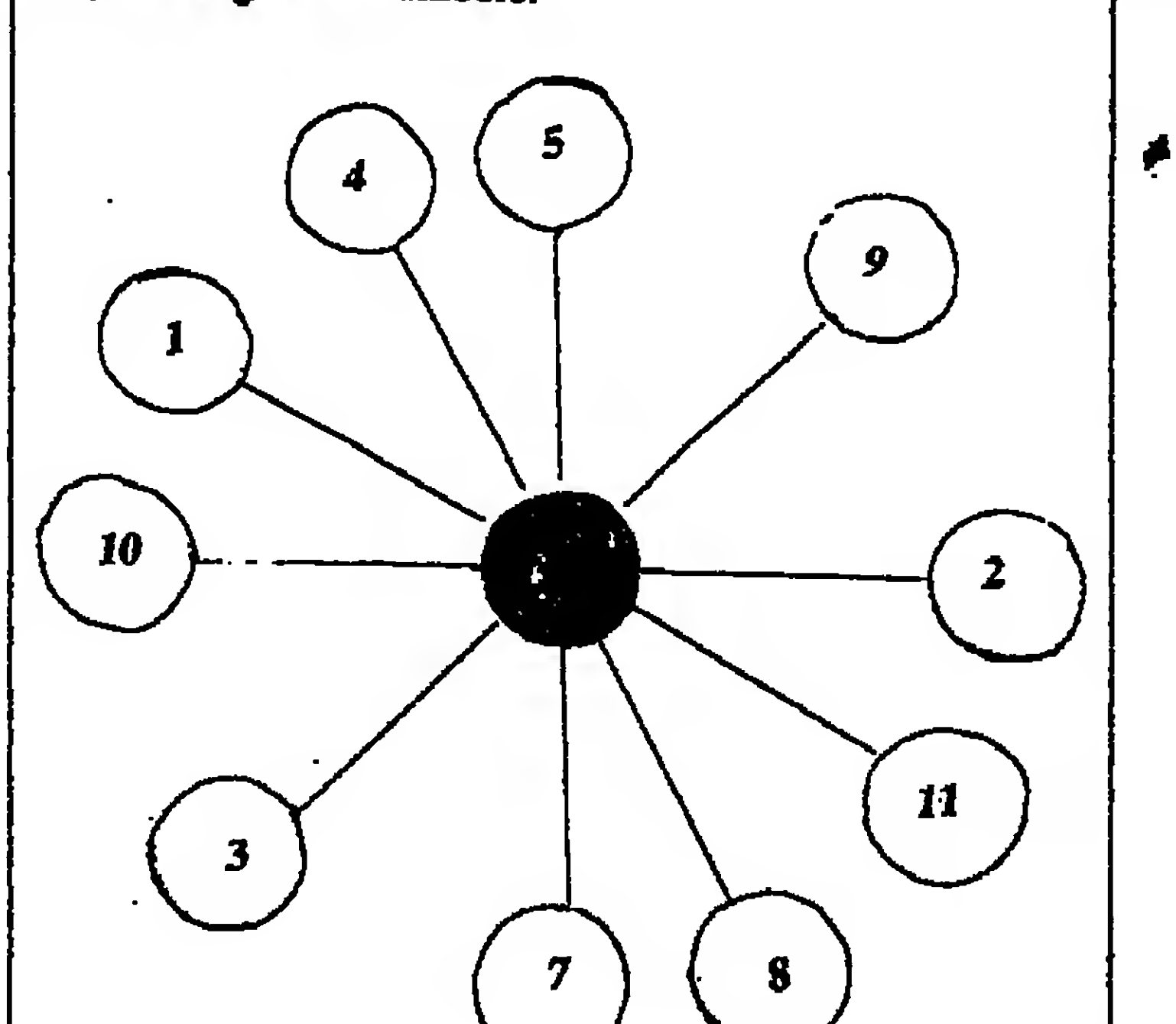
But patients are often afraid to seek treatment for fear of being rejected by their families and abandoned.

"In a country with 147 million people and where 60 million have never seen a doctor, it is difficult to attack a disease with a three-to-six-year incubation period and such subtle symptoms, like a small blemish," said Tatiana Moreira, who treats patients with leprosy.

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLES

(A) Arrange the numbers:



(B) Do it quickly, please!

The man ate EIGHT grapes on the first day.

Features

Algeria outlines path for return to democracy

By John Baggaley
Reuters

ALGIERS — After more than a year of emergency rule and bloody conflict with Islamic fundamentalists, Algeria's military-backed government has sketched out a shadowy path for a cautious return to democracy.

In a weekend address, head of state Ali Kafi held out the prospect of more liberalised political activity — paralleled by relentless security pressure to break up armed groups blamed for hundreds of killings.

Mr. Kafi promised a referendum this year on how the return to democracy would be managed. He did not say what questions would be put but diplomats saw the poll as a crucial first stage which must attract enough votes for the result to be seen as a real consensus.

"The referendum has to attract at least a credible number of voters to provide any legitimacy for future action," a European diplomat said Sunday, hours after Mr. Kafi's address.

"At least there was a reference to a resumption of elections which there hasn't been for some time, even if the speech left a lot of questions unanswered," said a Western diplomat.

The speech followed weeks of consultations with different groups as time runs out on the collective presidency whose mandate ends on Dec. 31.

Mr. Kafi said the unelected advisory National Consultative Council would be expanded to take in political parties and other groups, and would be given "reinforced prerogatives."

"There's a flickering light now at the end of the tunnel," a Western diplomat said.

"They seem to be advancing by minute steps but increasingly bringing in the parties who initially denounced the presidency as unconstitutional," said a European envoy.

The five-man presidency was installed after President Chadli Benjedid resigned over the advance of Muslim fundamentalists in a general election. Diplomats said Mr. Chadli was forced out.

The new authorities cancelled the poll, which the fundamental-

By Najwa Najjar-Kort
Special to the Jordan Times

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The second annual Cinema Nights of Jerusalem, which ended on May 5, was a testimony of the *de facto* separation of the Palestinian and Israeli societies, an issue at the heart of the ongoing Middle East peace talks.

"This film festival reflects a new and welcomed atmosphere, one which clearly divides Palestinians and Israelis," said Daoud Kuttub.

President of the Jerusalem Film Institute (JFI), a non-profit organisation founded in May 1991 for the promotion of film consciousness among Palestinians and sponsor of the Cinema Nights of Jerusalem.

Unlike most cultural events held in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the past, there was a noticeable lack of Israeli presence during the festival. "Even journalists were unceremonious and Israeli intellectuals did not show their usual interest (in the festival)," said Mr. Kuttub.

The closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip since late March and the border restrictions were

Israeli absence from Palestinian festival testifies to separate identities

indirect Israeli interference as these measures were responsible for low turnout rates of moviegoers in Jerusalem from the sealed off areas and from the Arab World.

Despite the effects on the festival, this Israeli security siege was considered particularly significant by Palestinians living in the occupied territories and festival sponsors. The siege, not an unusual measure Israelis adopt, was viewed in light of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's recent statements as a separation between Israelis and Palestinians.

The "borders" manned on every road leading into East Jerusalem by Israeli soldiers was further proof to Palestinians of the territorial division between the two peoples and a sign of the birth of a Palestinian state.

In response to the siege, the JFI decided to take the Cinema Nights of Jerusalem to Palestinians who could not enter Jerusalem during the festival from April 10-22. JFI members holding Jerusalem Israeli identification cards were able to travel to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to show the 33 films from ten different Arab countries between April 22 and May 5.

"In addition to breaking the security siege on our people by going to them, we also broke the cultural siege. We have been cut off from the Arab World for the past 25 years," said Mr. Kuttub. To combat the cultural blockade, the JFI decided to dedicate this year's film festival to Arab films.

The importance of showing "serious" films produced in the Arab World was stressed by JFI Artistic Director George Khleifi. "What Palestinians see on television and in video stores are cheap, commercially-made Arab films. Films that reflect the realism among Arab filmmakers are unavailable," Mr. Khleifi said.

Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, a renowned writer and an critic long before she became known as the articulate spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation, reiterated the importance of improving cinema appreciation among Palestinians at the festival's opening speech. Dr. Ashrawi said that the Palestinian cultural movement "is a reflection that the people are alive."

Screenings were made at both the Palestinian National Theatre and the Kasaba Theatre in East Jerusalem. Most of the films

shown were long feature films. Because 35mm projectors were not available, the films were projected through video. The films were divided into three categories: Classical Arab films, new Arab releases and Palestinian films.

The classical category included leading Egyptian Director Youssef Shafiq's masterpiece *Al Ard* (The Land) (1965) that portrays the struggle of small Egyptian farmers against landowners and Khaled Al Saddeeq's *Bas Ya Bahr* (Cruel Sea) (1971), the first Kuwaiti film that tackles the tense relationships among people in a society that does not promise much to its young people. Also included was the screenplay of Palestinian Ghassan Kanafan's famous novel *Men in the Sun* (1973).

Elie Suleiman, a filmmaker from Nazareth presently living in New York, was at the festival to present his film *Homage by Assassination* (1992), which was among the new release category. His film has attracted world film critics' attention because of his successful search for a new cinematic language. *Homage by Assassination* was grouped with four other works on the Gulf war

by filmmakers from Morocco, Lebanon and Tunis. These five directors were given an opportunity to express their opinions on the Gulf war and its effects on the average Arab citizen and intellectual.

Other new releases featured at the festival included Jordan's Najid Anzour's film *An Eastern Tale* (1991), Moroccan Malay award-winning film *The Night* (1992), Moroccan Jilal Farhat's *The Shores of the Lost Children* (1991) and Egyptian Asma Bakri's *Beggars and Noblemen* (1991).

In addition to Mr. Suleiman, only two other directors were able to attend their films fell under the Palestinian film category. Hani Abu Assad from Nazareth, now living in Holland, wrote and directed his first short film *Paper House* (1992) and Ali Arsouly of Akko, now living in the United States wrote, directed and produced her own documentary, *Torn Living* (1993). Ironically, local filmmaker from Beit Jala (less than five miles away from Jerusalem) Hanan Muehle, who wrote and directed the documentary *We Are God's Soldiers* (1993) was unable to attend the showing of his film.

Mr. Kuttub said that the JFI had decided to invest in this cultural event despite the internal and external obstacles, especially the meager financial and human resources, "since the only way to place ourselves on the political map in this volatile, unstable atmosphere was to act and not talk."

Mr. Kuttub said that last year's first Cinema Nights of Jerusalem, which was dedicated to Palestinian films, must have been a success, judging from the increased local interest. Its success encouraged the JFI to continue holding the festival and to undertake new projects. Recently, the JFI has embarked on training Palestinians in film and video production and producing films that are shown locally and internationally.

JFI founders hope that the Cinema Nights of Jerusalem will become a permanent feature on the city's agenda, a part which will help in making Jerusalem a cultural capital for Palestinians.

Mr. Kuttub, himself a writer, has recently returned from Jerusalem and is currently working as a filmmaker in Amman.



Various scenes from the movies shown at this year's Cinema Nights of Jerusalem festival



Police, ANC form tentative bond in S. Africa

By Judith Matloff
Reuters

PRETORIA — A white policeman affably hands a megaphone to an ANC activist calling for the end of white minority rule, an image of new, tentative cooperation between South Africa's traditional foes.

White police wrestle to the ground a white rightwinger who shot dead two black protesters. African National Congress (ANC) township officials hand over to police thugs who killed a journalist. Police and ANC organisers huddle at rallies to stop looters and rioters.

As South Africa takes halting violent steps towards multi-racial democracy, cooperation once unthinkable is emerging between the ANC government-in-waiting and its erstwhile police enemies.

The ANC still accuses the police of shooting unarmed township protesters and senior police officials question its ability to control its followers.

Since the April 10 murder of black Communist Party leader Chris Hani, the two sides have been thrown together to save the country from violent disaster. At least 80 people, most of them blacks, have been killed in violence since Mr. Hani's death.

But police and the ANC have struck delicate, unprecedented deals to ensure potentially explosive rallies were largely orderly. "Cooperation was good," ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa said last month after police and ANC marshals working together ensured mourning ceremonies for Mr. Hani that drew tens of thousands of blacks were mainly peaceful.

"What has been played out this week is instructive — this is the embryonic stage of joint control of the security forces."

The ANC and other black anti-apartheid groups taking part in multi-party negotiations on a transition to democracy are demanding joint control over South Africa's white-led security forces along with black guerrilla groups.

The police force is 60 per cent black and the government late last year appointed its first three non-white generals.

Except for one day of urban riots and some isolated incidents, Mr. Hani's funeral and other memorial events were largely peaceful as police and ANC officials consulted to ensure white rightists did not attack protesters and township anger did not spill

out of control.

"The cooperation has been superb," said a U.N. observer in Pretoria, the seat of white power where ANC and police officials walked side by side to maintain order at a march.

At one point a white policeman lent ANC organiser Donnie Khumalo his megaphone so his supporters could hear calls for black majority rule.

The march on police headquarters was technically banned by the city council but police said they had decided to let it go ahead to defuse tensions.

"They've been very disciplined," Colonel Royce Merton said of the ANC marshals, looking calm on as they delivered a statement at the headquarters calling for the end of the government he serves.

"The cooperation has been exemplary, an example for the rest of the country," Mr. Khumalo agreed.

But while collaboration may be emerging on the ground, many on both sides of the old war are slow to be convinced.

Summer Nights At The Marriott

Al Mansaf

As of this and every coming Thursday, shop for dinner while seated at Al Mansaf Patio where we created a stylish Seafood Market. Choose the fish of your liking (flown in fresh daily from Bahrain) and it will be grilled to your taste.

Priced to suit your appetite, per kilo (salad bar, soup and desert included).

Marriott Garden

Enjoy a casual evening out at the Marriott Garden: Arabic seating, hubble-bubble, mezzah, fresh bread and much more. Bring the whole crowd

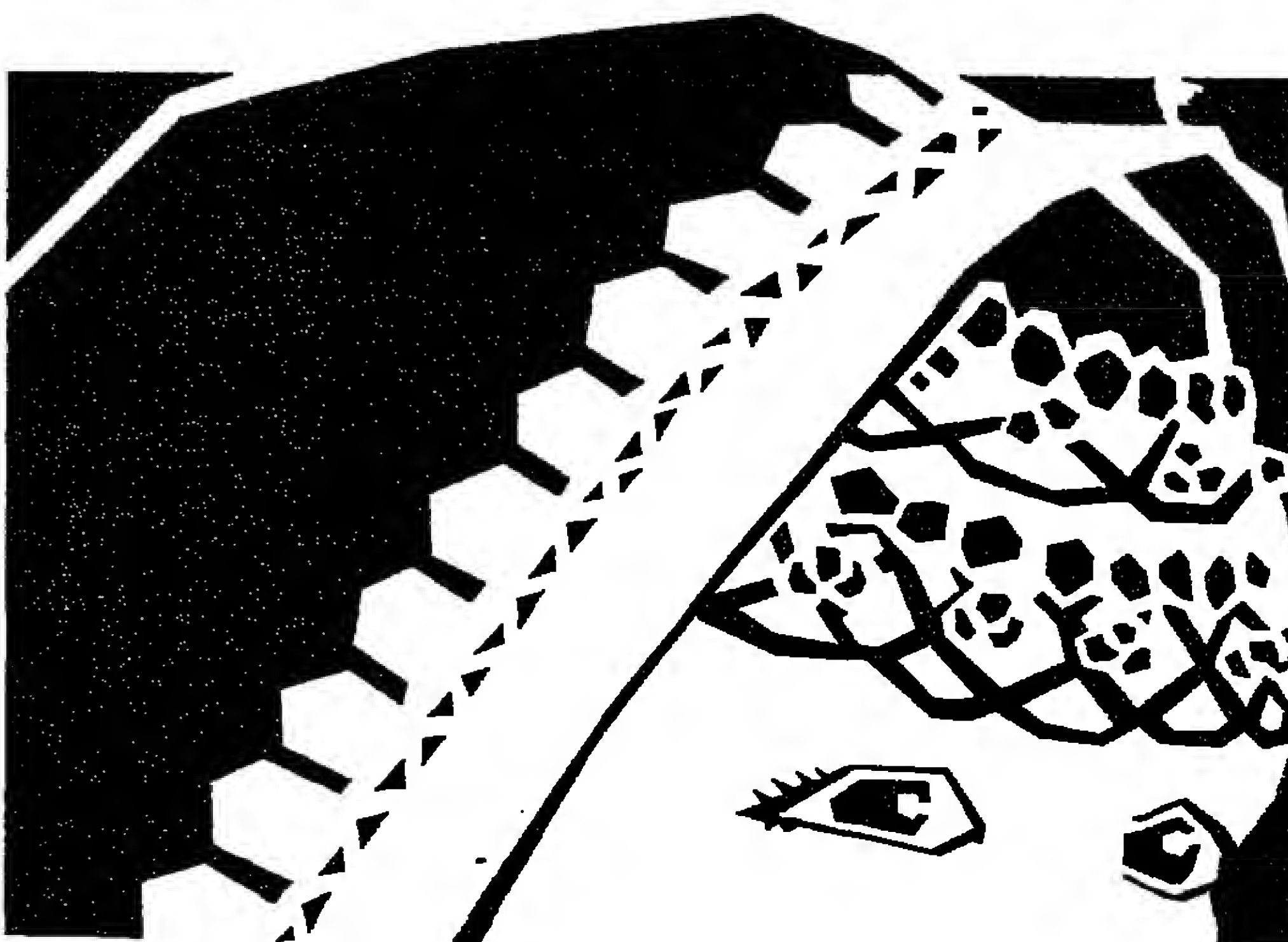
Al Rababa

If you're in for some partying, The Survivors Band and the new Belly Dancer at Al Rababa Nightclub entertain you with the latest Arabic music hits till the early hours.

AMMAN

Marriott

NON-STOP TO THE GULF



4 TIMES A WEEK

Gulf Air offers non-stop afternoon flights from Amman to Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Doha 4 times a week. Whichever class you travel, you'll fly in



comfort and style, enjoying our traditional hospitality. Come fly with us and discover the international smile of the Gulf.

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Report: Africa poorer despite decade of economic reforms

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — African incomes shrank for the second year in a row in 1992, the African Development Bank (ADB) said Wednesday in a bleak report that offered no hope of speed relief.

Countries that for more than a decade have imposed stringent economic reforms that targeted the poorest of the world's poor now are looking for ways to relieve their plight, the bank's 1993 report said.

Confronted by economic recession, huge debts and slumping prices for their commodities, most African governments bowed to pressures from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and imposed punishing reforms in the 1980s.

But they did it grudgingly. Instead of cutting spending on bloated bureaucracies or on armies that might turn on them, governments hit at those with the least power to retaliate.

"Key social sector services, especially to the poor, often proved to be the softest targets for cuts," bank vice president

Ferhat Lounes of Algeria told a news conference.

Tanzania, a country that was deeply committed to providing social services, cut expenditure on education from 17.3 per cent of the budget in 1972 to 7.2 per cent in 1985. Primary school enrollment, which had risen to nearly 100 per cent, fell to 66 per cent in 1988, the report said.

Similar erosion, that the report warned would dog long-term development, occurred across the continent.

Now, Tanzania is financing income-generating projects for vulnerable groups. Senegal has a retraining programme for workers laid off when unproductive state companies were shut down. Madagascar abolished a subsidy on rice that devastated the urban poor but now provides free rice to the destitute.

In many countries, people revolted against the hardship. Their protests grew into demands for democracy that have ousted a few governments. They also brought prolonged unrest and instability

where military dictators refuse to surrender power, as in Zaïre and Togo.

Africa's democracy movement "is a very positive force" but risks being submerged by economic difficulties, Mr. Lounes said.

Population growth of 3.1 per cent again outstripped sluggish economic gains in 1992. The real value of the continent's good and services grew by only 1.9 per cent, down from 2.6 per cent in 1991.

External debt increased by about \$9 billion to more than \$255 billion. Servicing debts cost Africans more than 32 per cent of export earnings.

The continent's share of world trade decreased, terms of trade deteriorated by 4.2 per cent and the trade balance recorded a deficit of \$12.4 billion, \$8.3 billion more than in 1991.

Food imports accounted for much of the rise in imports — due to an apocalyptic drought that stretched along the Indian Ocean coast from the Cape to Cairo and west through Namibia into southern Angola, the bank

said. It also blamed Africa's "disappointing performance" on civil strife and conflicts, though one war-torn nation, Liberia, reported increased economic growth in 1992. This appeared to be because of exports of minerals, diamonds, rubber and timber from behind the lines of rebel leader Charles Taylor.

Regional integration was the only hope of success for Africa's small and fragile economies in a world increasingly being partitioned into trading blocs, the bank said.

That, too, is a long way off. Though the continent has plans for a pan-African economic community, most trade now is through smuggling. Ivory Coast, where the bank has its headquarters, is part of the 16-nation economic community of African states that was formed 18 years ago when trade between members accounted for four per cent of imports and exports. Officials trade remains at four per cent today.

Premier says Russia should produce more, import less

MOSCOW (R) — Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Tuesday that Russia should import less foreign technology and concentrate on producing more of its own.

RIA news agency quoted him as saying during a visit to Russia's north Caucasus region that Russian companies were capable of producing many types of goods and equipment that were now being bought abroad.

"If we don't set up a barrier to technology purchases from abroad, we will never survive," he was reported as saying. "It is not immediately clear if he was recommending tariff barriers on an outright ban."

Agencies quoted Mr. Chernomyrdin as saying Russia was not a "beggar" and should resist attempts to reduce it to a mere exporter of raw materials.

"People want to make us a country exporting raw materials but not producing or processing

goods," Interfax quoted him as saying.

"Reform won't work unless we start producing. Not even the harshest monetary and credit policy will stop inflation unless we fill the market with goods," he emphasised.

Mr. Chernomyrdin, a technocrat with many years of experience in the energy sector, has attached high priority to reviving Russia's ailing industries since he replaced the more radical Yegor Gaidar as prime minister last December.

Interfax said Mr. Chernomyrdin insisted: "Russia is a great country which has everything it needs. We need to produce more ourselves."

The agencies said the prime minister added that conversion of the old military-industrial complex meant that Russian companies could now make food-processing equipment to the best international standards.

"I'm fed up of talk about

buying processing equipment abroad," RIA quoted him as saying.

Mr. Chernomyrdin also complained that foreign credits were being offered to Russia only in exchange for oil, gas, gold and other raw materials which foreigners wanted to ship out of the country.

He said the cabinet had set itself the task of halting the fall in production — which dropped to a fifth last year — and creating a mechanism to stimulate output. RIA reported.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MAY 13, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Sit back and analyse whatever arises today that is unexpected and think things over before committing your resources and yourself to any one plan that isn't entirely under your control.

ARIES: March 21 to April 19) Despite the negative suggestions of an acquaintance you would be wise to pursue your biggest plans since you have a real chance to make them a success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have some very astute awareness just what to do to aid conditions at your residence even though it will cost more than you want to spend.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You should not allow a tense situation in the outside world to interfere with performing usual routines of importance with your colleagues.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A secret worry can preoccupy your time if you allow it but instead focus your attention upon more practical matters and they work out well.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Look into the various personal wishes that mean the most to you and steer clear of one who is trying to get you to do something you do not wish to do.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Think about the various private ambitions that motivate you to

extend your life to new horizons and avoid a bigwig looking for a whipping boy.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Steer clear of that urge to go off on some tangent and get together with a magnanimous minded friend who helps you in most every way.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get into whatever official or public duties require your attention and don't let a bore through you off the track by much conversation.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be off and away to whatever advanced conditions are at your fingertips and make headway instead of remaining tied up in home conditions.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Consider well what you can do to get your practical affair on a more solid and secure structure and don't let dull chores keep you from such.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You want to have a good time but instead a power associate is ready and willing to enter into a serious discussion of importance to you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your ideas are not all good today and you would be wise to listen closely to what those who work side-by-side with you have to suggest.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY MAY 14, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Gleaning the data you need will better equip you to meet demands that may soon be made upon you in connection with some new project that has captured your attention. Count the cost well up front.

ARIES: March 21 to April 19) A new inspiration comes to you on how you can best project yourself on a lofty plane and then reduce such a course to a workable success, tonight protect your health.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Do something special to please your family and then get into whatever your communications are of a practical nature requiring your attention.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have all kinds of good ideas how to get messages across to those looking to you for advice but where not equipped you can quickly find data.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have an excellent idea where your financial affairs are concerned which can be improved by discussions with a confidante and bigwig.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You own personal progress now can be better arranged if you are more down to earth and less visionary in going after the things you want most.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have an intimate goal for

which you are tending your efforts but you need to get the standpoint of an associate who sees things in a new light.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Think about what a generous friend can do for you and then seek out ways that you can show your appreciation in some material manner and please that person.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The outside world is your oyster today if you make a point to get together with a prominent person at a charming spot and state your wishes.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have all sorts of new ways to get things as you wish but it is also imperative that you help your family with some duties to be performed.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Doing what your mate wishes cheerfully can bring more happiness to you both while later you can get off with a congenial companion to a fine location.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make a move so a powerful person knows you want that person in your life more and then discuss and make arrangements with your family of a money nature.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Think in terms of more operative skill at your talent and put in motion right away before going off to see and get better acquainted with an influential person.

Approvals for investment in Australia decline 17%

SYDNEY (AFP) — Official approvals for investment in Australia in fiscal 1991-92 declined 17 per cent on the previous year to 16.7 billion Australian dollars (\$23.8 billion), the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) has said.

The FIRB annual report revealed the government approved 2,981 requests in the year to June 30, 1992, compared with 2,525 approvals for projects worth 20.2 billion dollars the previous year.

It said that of the 16.7 billion dollars approved, 13 billion dollars were for direct acquisitions and 3.6 billion dollars went to development proposals.

By sector, the acquisition approvals were: Real estate 4.3 billion dollars, manufacturing 1.6 billion dollars, mining 2.1 billion dollars, non-tourism services 3.3 billion dollars, and tourism 800 million dollars.

Expected investment fell 25 per cent in manufacturing from 3.1 billion dollars in 1990-91 to 2.3 billion dollars, by 59 per cent in mining from 5.4 billion dollars to 2.2 billion dollars, and by 32 per cent in tourism from 1.9 billion dollars to 1.3 billion dollars.

But expected investment in services, excluding tourism, increased by 52 per cent from 2.3 billion dollars to 3.5 billion dollars.

Japan accounted for 2.6 billion dollars or 15.6 per cent of total expected investment, the United States 1.9 billion dollars or 11 per cent, Britain 1.8 billion dollars or 10.7 per cent, New Zealand 900 million dollars or 5.4 per cent, Singapore 700 million dollars or 4.2 per cent, and Hong Kong 600 million dollars or 3.6 per cent.

Argentina hopes to create one million new jobs by '95

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentina has unveiled an economic programme designed to bring inflation down to four per cent and create one million jobs by the end of President Carlos Menem's term two years from now.

A populist convert to the free market, Mr. Menem took office in 1989 with the country gripped by hyperinflation. He is due to hand over power in July, 1995 unless he succeeds in reforming a constitution that bars him from seeking a second consecutive term.

The 1993-1995 programme, explained in a three-volume book titled "Argentina growing," was presented during a news conference by Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo.

The programme reiterated targets set by Mr. Menem in his state of the union message, including wrestling inflation down to four per cent from the current 12 per cent by 1995.

Mr. Cavallo added that it is also aimed at critics who argue that the policies of the populist, Peronist government are good for stabilising the economy but have been incapable of generating growth.

"This is the productive revolution in his election campaign," an impassioned Cavallo said. "This is ... a plan for growth."

Provided his reforms work and no major changes occur internationally, Mr. Menem expects to end his term with a gross domestic product of \$273 billion, up from \$226 billion in 1992.

Under Mr. Menem and Mr. Cavallo, Argentina has restructured its foreign domestic debt, privatised money-losing utilities

and opened its markets to foreign competition.

The government has also taken steps to reform its tax structure and crack down on a large population of tax dodgers.

Currently, it is trying to overhaul its pensions system to establish a programme similar to the one that allowed Chile to build one of the region's strongest capital markets.

Besides bringing inflation down to its lowest levels in nearly five decades, the Menem administration wants to add one million new jobs to a work force of 12 million people.

"One million new jobs sounds ambitious, but if, despite hyperinflation, in the first part of President Menem's term we created over 600,000 jobs, we believe this new target is within our possibilities," Mr. Cavallo said.

Argentina's inflation is now around 12 per cent, with a tendency to decrease. Unemployment stands at seven per cent.

The government will now concentrate on boosting domestic savings and cutting production costs, Mr. Cavallo said.

As Mr. Menem had announced, Argentina will scrap all import duties on capital goods, hardware and equipment used to upgrade industrial plant and machinery.

"This is unprecedented in our history," Mr. Cavallo said. This means farmers and businessmen will be able to buy the highest quality and lowest priced technology available, lowering production costs and modernising their operations.

The government also intends to make Argentina less dependent on capital inflows. For the past two years, it attracted enough capital to bridge current-account shortfalls and boost investment.

Mr. Cavallo's projections forecast persistent albeit falling current account deficits and 1999.

The minister, however, said he did not view this as a negative sign.

"This is a token of foreigners' confidence in Argentina. We will have current deficits and trade balance deficits as long as we continue using external savings to finance investments," he added.

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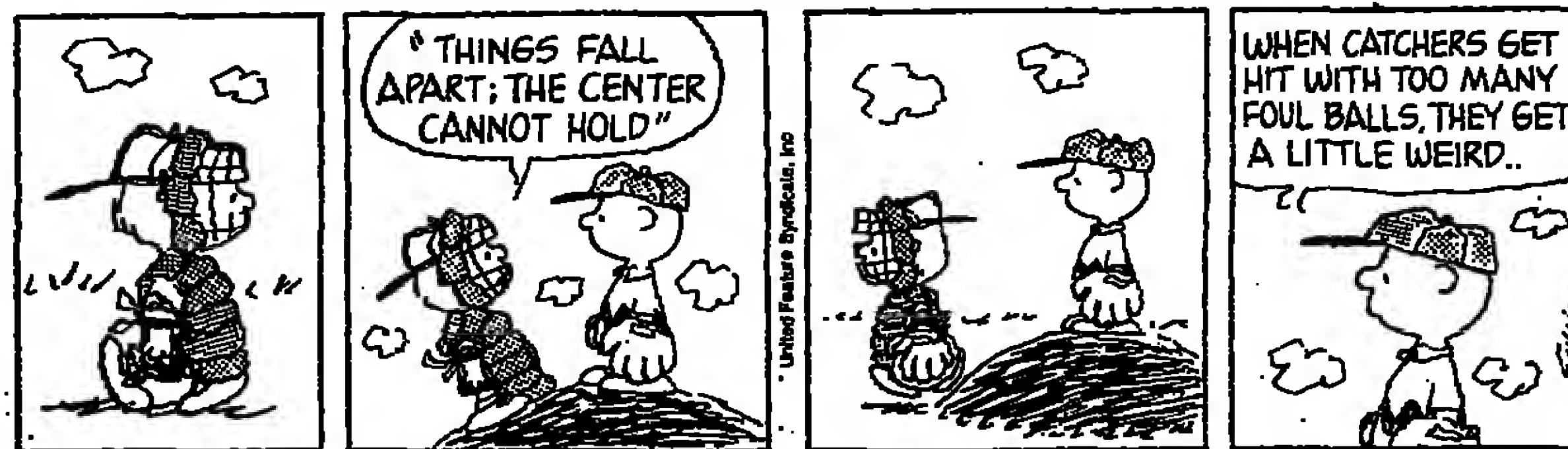
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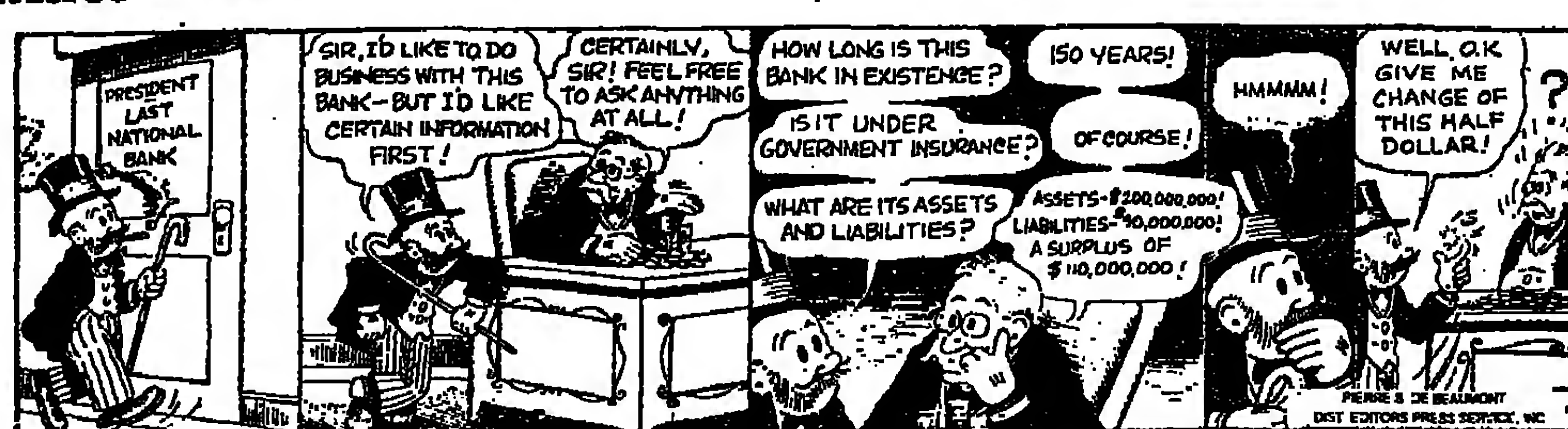
Peanuts



Andy Capp

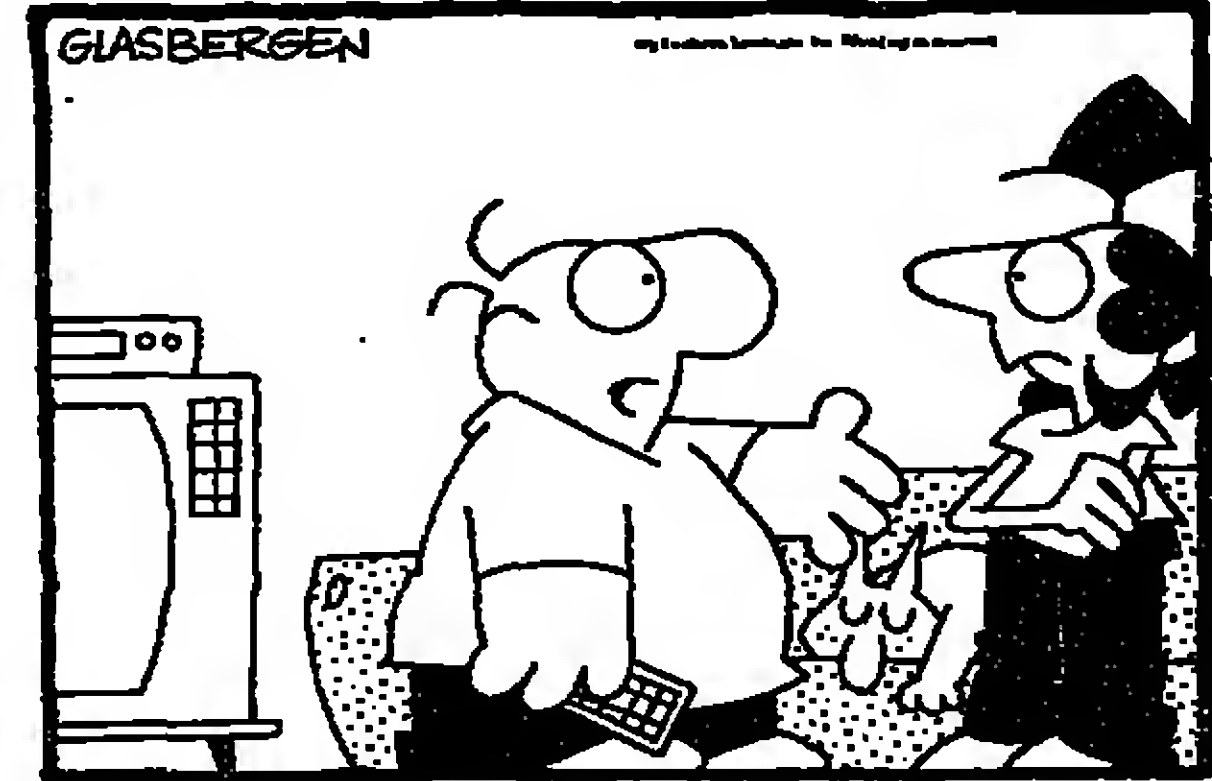


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

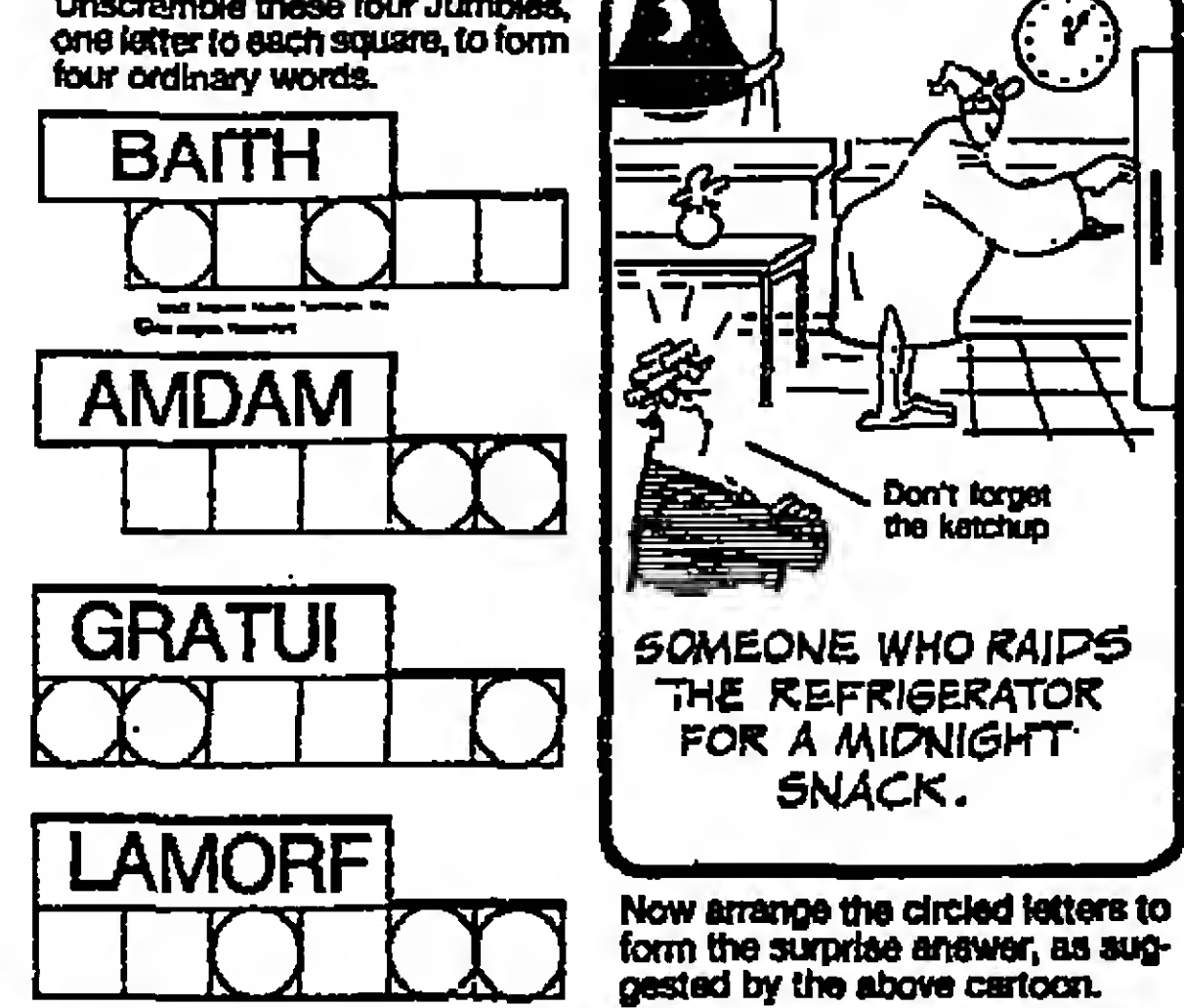
By Glasbergen



"I'd never sneak around with other women. I'd miss my programs!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

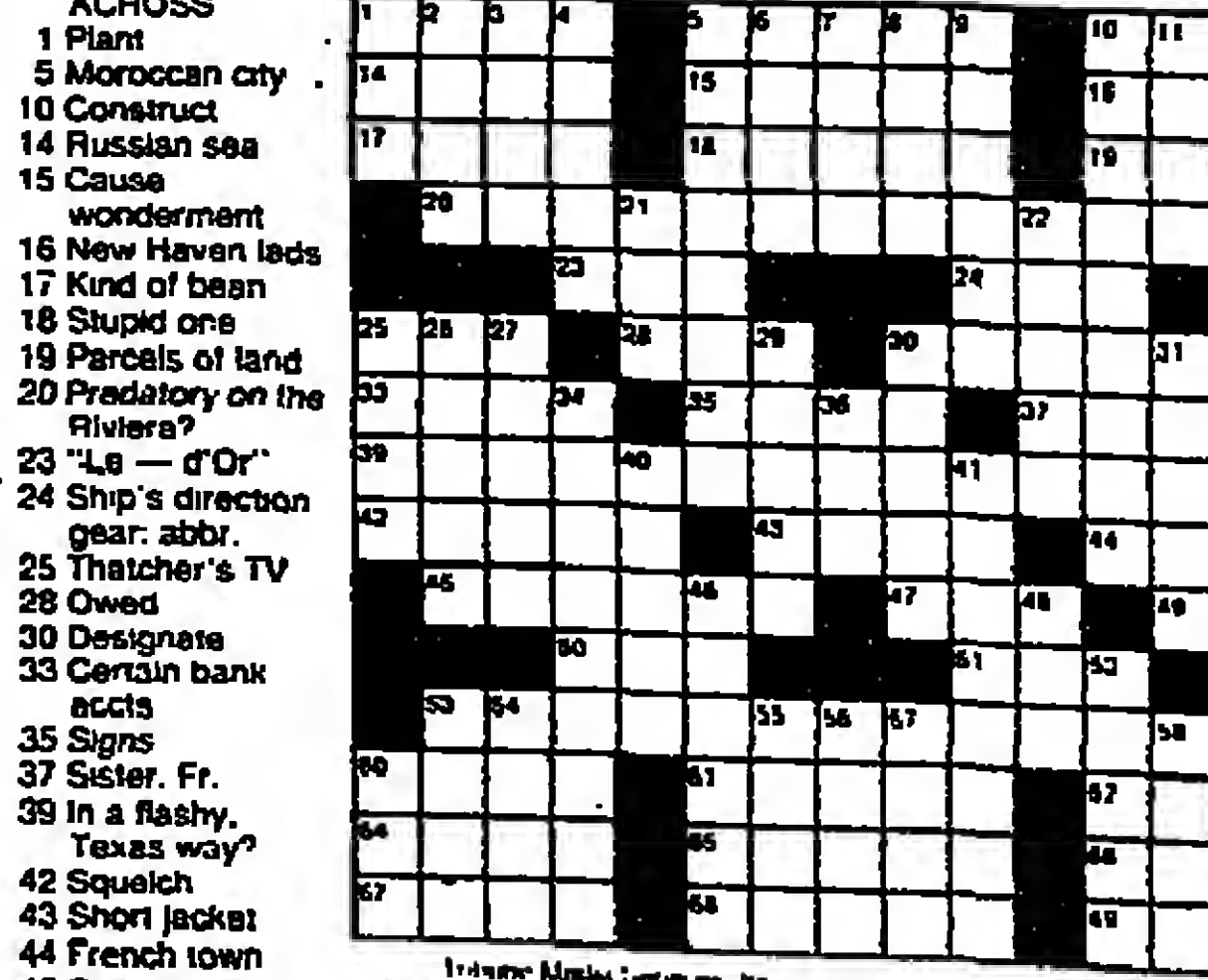


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: What the prison designer created—QUITE A STIR

THE Daily Crossword

by Robert D. Wilder



Queen forgets speech, gives job to husband

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II gave one of the briefest addresses of her reign, after falling victim to a very common problem. Arriving at the Commonwealth Institute for its centenary celebration, the 67-year-old monarch was seen running through her black patent leather purse, the 1 handing her next to her husband, Prince Philip. "I am going to ask my husband to read my speech for me," she told the crowd, and sat down. "I am afraid the queen forgot to bring her glasses," Prince Philip explained. An old hand at speech-giving himself, he delivered the seven-page address with hardly a hesitation. The royal couple were marking the anniversary of the institute, which was opened by Queen Victoria as the Imperial Institute 100 years ago.

Woman donates prime property to home town

TOKYO (R) — An 88-year-old Japanese woman has donated a piece of the world's most expensive real estate to her home town, a spokeswoman for the town office said. The property, worth about 900 million yen (\$8.1 million), comprises a 50-square-metre (540-square-foot) patch of land and the two-storey wooden building on it. It is located in Ginza, the central Tokyo district that contains many of Japan's most expensive department stores and office buildings. Tsuru Inoue said she hoped her home town of Shiojiri, in the mountains of Nagano prefecture, would use the property for welfare. She runs an elite bar on the site, which she said she would continue to do until her death.

Garth Brooks gets top country award

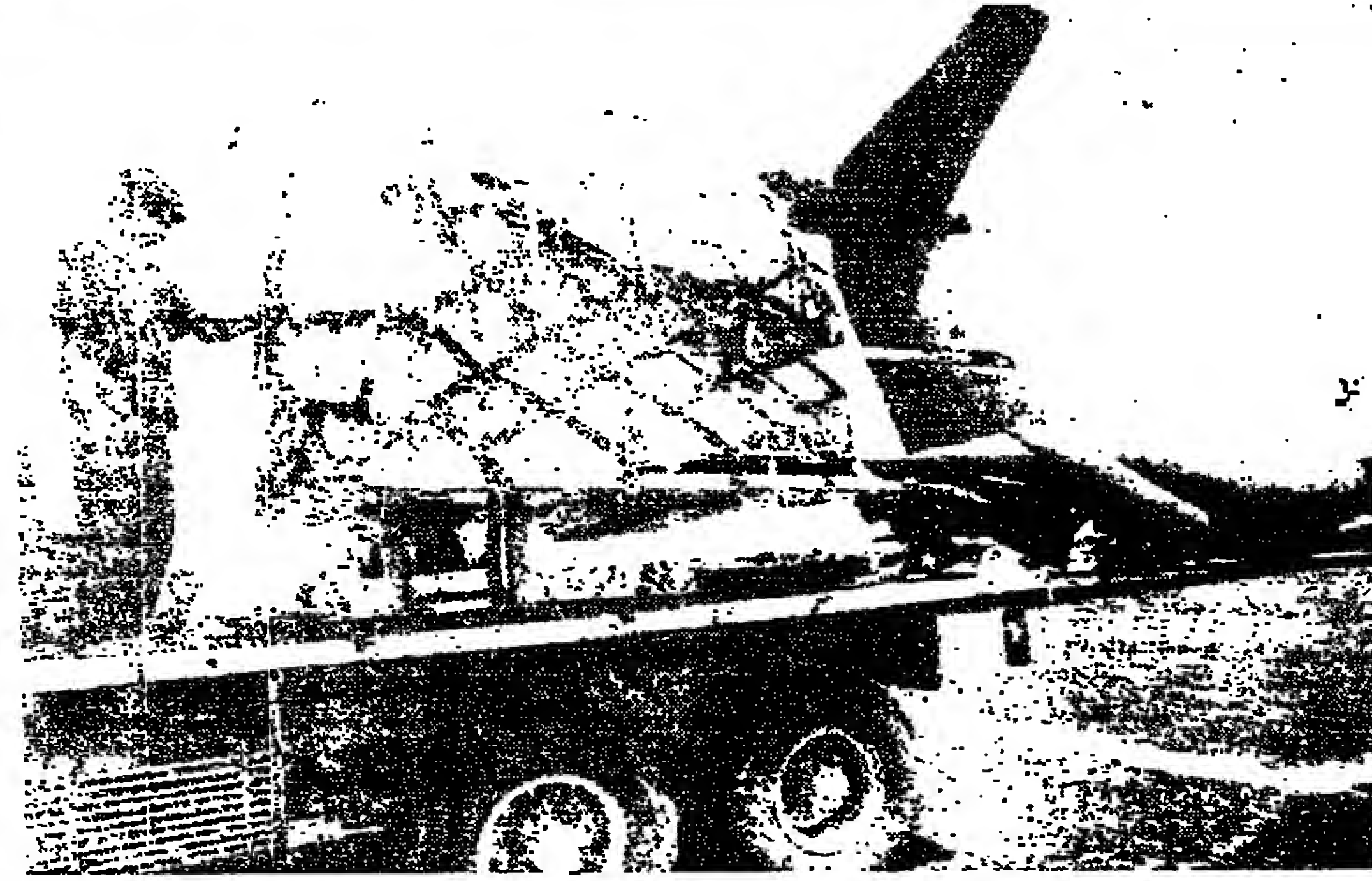
UNIVERSAL CITY, California (AP) — Singer Garth Brooks won his third straight entertainer of the year award, and the duo Brooks and Dunn earned three trophies at the Academy of Country Music Awards. "I'd really like to thank you all out there. God bless you," Garth Brooks said in accepting his ninth Academy Trophy in three years. Brooks and Dunn won Best Album for Brand New Man, top single record for their honky-tonk dance tune Boot Scootin' Boogie and Best Vocal Duo. Crooner Vince Gill won two awards, his first since being named Top New Male Vocalist in 1985. He was named Top Male Vocalist and won the Top Song Award for I Still Believe In You. Mary-Chapin Carpenter, led by the success of her ribald smash I Feel Lucky, won the female vocalist trophy. Tracy Lawrence was named Best New Male Vocalist for his album and hit single, Alois. Michelle Wright, best known for her hit Take It Like A Man, was named Top New Female Vocalist. The hard-driving band Diamond Rio beat out Alabama to win their second consecutive Top Group Award.

Costner's mane soon criticized

GLENDALE, California (AP) — Kevin Costner's mane man is facing more criticism after giving the close-cropped actor's hair an even shorter cut for the Christmas season movie A Perfect World. Frank Ramos has been Costner's personal hairdresser for five years. But since the release of Costner's movie The Bodyguard, Ramos has been ridiculed for the star's coiffure. "It's funny how in Aliens a woman can shave her head bald and the critics don't mention it, but Kevin gets a short haircut and they go after him," Ramos said. In his review of The Bodyguard for the Los Angeles Times last November, Peter Rainer said the movie of the movie should be: "Never get a really bad haircut."

Diana meets stepmother's fiance

LONDON (AP) — The Princess of Wales met her stepmother's new fiance in a chance encounter at a hotel lobby. Princess Diana, estranged wife of Prince Charles, was at Claridge's Hotel for a private luncheon on behalf of the National AIDS Trust. Raine Spencer, a widow since Princess Diana's father, Earl Spencer, died last year, was lunching separately with French Count Jean-Francois De Chambrun, the day after their marriage plans were announced. As the newly engaged couple left the hotel, Raine told reporters they had met Princess Diana inside and talked. "The princess sent us some gorgeous flowers last night, with a message. It was very nice of her," the Countess Spencer said. Despite widely published reports that Princess Diana and her brother and sisters dislike their stepmother, Raine said, "I am on very good terms with my stepchildren." She said she hoped they would attend her July wedding.



Airport workers load pallets carrying U.S. donated shipments, flown in by U.S. Air Force jets, for the U.N. troops in Cambodia (AFP photo)

U.N. beefs up Cambodia protection

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The United Nations beefed up its security measures Wednesday ahead of the violence expected to accompany elections 11 days away, flying in thousands of U.S.-donated flak jackets, helmets and emergency flares for U.N. personnel under fire in the Cambodian countryside.

"All I can say is, it's better to be safe than sorry," said U.S. envoy Charles Twining who was on hand as a C-141 transport plane landed at Pochentong Airport, delivering the first load of 6,500 flak jackets, 10,000 helmets, flares and first aid supplies. "I think it's important for all of us in the world to do what we can to make sure this election is a success," he said.

The equipment will be distributed to U.N. personnel, including electoral workers, stationed in dangerous remote areas of Cambodia where they risk becoming casualties in what appears to have become a Khmer Rouge campaign to disrupt the elections.

Another U.N. civilian policeman, this time from India, was injured Tuesday when two unidentified assailants riding a motorcycle threw hand grenades at his car driving on Route 69 north of Sisophon, near the Thai border in northwest Cambodia. U.N. spokesman Eric Falt said. The grenade exploded a few

metres away from the car, damaging it and lightly injuring the Indian inside, Mr. Falt said. The situation in the rest of the country overnight was relatively quiet, he said, following fighting in three provinces over the weekend that left one Pakistani peacekeeper injured.

At least 10 deaths of U.N. personnel so far are attributed to the Khmer Rouge. Another 62 Cambodian civilians were killed and 137 injured at the hands of the Khmer Rouge in April alone, according to UNTAC figures.

The flak jackets and helmets will be distributed in what the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) called the "most security sensitive areas" of the country. Their most likely destinations will be the troubled provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang in the northwest, Kompong Cham and Kompong Thom in central and Kompong

Kompong Speu in the south. Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong said Wednesday if the Phnom Penh government wins elections later this month, it will resume its fight against the Khmer Rouge to end the partition of Cambodia.

"We are prepared for combat because the partition of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge leaves us no other choice," the Phnom Penh government foreign minister said in an interview. "Cambodia will never accept this partition," he said. The Khmer Rouge, now the sole armed group opposed to the Phnom Penh government, controls large areas in the north and west of Cambodia along the frontier with Thailand.

Since the Maoist guerrillas pulled out of the U.N. peace process last June, UNTAC has been unable to enter these areas, which have a low population but large forests and reserves of gems.

Mr. Hor Namhong said that if Thailand "remains neutral" and closes its frontier then "the Khmer Rouge will not survive long militarily."

Meanwhile, dismissing mounting calls to pull out from Cambodia, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa vowed Wednesday to keep Japanese peacekeepers in the country despite a rising number of attacks by Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

In a televised news conference, Mr. Miyazawa also pledged to provide another one million dollars to the UNTAC to improve transportation.

"I think we should stick to the end of our target of holding elections that reflect the will of the majority of Cambodians through participation in UNTAC operations," he said, referring to the May 23-27 poll.

British home secretary dismisses royal bugging claim as 'nonsense'

LONDON (AFP) — Claims that British intelligence bugged an argument between the Prince and Princess of Wales over custody of their children were dismissed as "nonsense" Wednesday by Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke.

The tabloid newspaper The Sun claimed the agency MI5 taped the conversation in the privacy of the royal couple's country home Highgrove last November, a month before their legal separation.

The Sun's transcript of the alleged conversation reveals nothing extraordinary, a banal litany of jibes and sarcasm between an unhappy couple in the throes of breaking up.

More significant was the renewed charge that government intelligence services were in the business of bugging the royal family's private telephones and now, allegedly, their private living quarters.

MI5 had previously been implicated in the taping of intimate telephone conversations between the prince and princess and their respective friends. But the agency always denied the charges and no hard proof was ever presented.

"There is not a shred of evidence to show it is MI5," Mr. Clarke said. "It is all nonsense. If it were to be true I would be absolutely astonished."

But it was Prime Minister John Major, as titular head of Britain's security services, who was expected to face a barrage of questions in the House of Commons over the new charges.

There were already demands for a top-level public inquiry. Labour MPs, terming the claim an "outrage," were stressing it "immeasurably" strengthens the case for putting the secret services under the control and surveillance of a House of Commons committee.

The Sun claimed the latest tape was hidden in an MI5 file labelled DI — Discarded Information — and may have been brought to light by a disgruntled secret service employee.

The paper's transcript portrays Prince Charles and Princess Diana in a heated discussion over the future of Princes William, 10, and Harry, eight, and where they would spend Christmas.

At one stage in the conversation, Princess Diana storms at

Prince Charles: "Oh, don't be so bloody childish!" Her husband retorts: "Oh God."

"Say something I want to hear," she demands. "I'm leaving," he replies. Diana: "For once, stop being so self-centred. You still think of me as the person you married."

Charles: "I stopped thinking like that years ago."

Diana: "Yes, I suppose that would be a good indication of why we drifted apart, my dear."

Meanwhile, outrage mounted among opposition MPs asking why MI5 would be bugging the royal family, and who else was under the microscope.

"These people have been bugging and bugging their way around for far too long without any check or scrutiny," said Labour MP Robert Cryer. "It is time their intrusive actions were brought to an end."

"The bugging of the Prince and Princess of Wales is not a question of a threat to national security or a question of the future of the monarchy," said shadow minister Mo Mowlam. "If royalty and politicians are being bugged... who else?"

Yeltsin convenes special assembly on constitution

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin, defying conservative foes, Wednesday ordered the convening of a special assembly next month to finalise a new presidential constitution for Russia and to decide how it will be enacted.

In a decree released by the Kremlin, Mr. Yeltsin accused the hardline parliament of blocking efforts to consult the Russian people by referendum on a new basic law for post-Soviet Russia and announced a Constituent Assembly for June 5.

The decree stated that the assembly would be charged with "finalising preparation" of a new constitution but did not specify how or when Mr. Yeltsin would attempt to see the new document enacted to replace the current Brezhnev-era law.

A spokesman for Mr. Yeltsin's press office told AFP it was the Constituent Assembly itself that would determine the guidelines for having the new constitution approved.

Under current law, only the Congress of People's Deputies — the fullscale, Soviet-era parliament that Mr. Yeltsin has sought for much of the past year to abolish — is empowered to modify the constitution or enact a new one.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree stated that the Constituent Assembly would comprise two delegates from each of the 88 "subjects," or regions and republics, of the Russian

Federation as well as presidential and parliamentary representatives.

The Russian leader said his decision to convene the assembly was justified given the results of the April 25 referendum "which confirmed the legitimacy of the president of Russia and confidence in his socio-economic policy."

The decision to convene the assembly came a day after Mr. Yeltsin sacked two top officials who had opposed his policies and was the latest thrust in the president's campaign to consolidate reform and sideline conservative opponents.

Shortly before Mr. Yeltsin's decree was published, parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov appealed to lawmakers not to fall into a "trap" laid by Mr. Yeltsin, who he sought to involve them in "questionable affairs" with his assembly plan.

"Only the Supreme Soviet, the future supreme legislative organ, can adopt the constitution," Mr. Khasbulatov told an emergency meeting of representatives from local parliaments throughout Russia.

Valery Zorkin, the chief justice of the Constitutional Court and a frequent critic of the president, also denounced Mr. Yeltsin's assembly plan and argued that the referendum results did not give Mr. Yeltsin authority for such a move.

Mr. Zorkin attacked unnamed

"foreign advisors" in the Yeltsin camp and drew a hypothetical parallel between Mr. Yeltsin's actions and a U.S. president telling the Senate that the U.S. constitution was too old and should be scrapped.

Despite the criticism from his adversaries, Mr. Yeltsin nonetheless appeared to have the upper hand in his struggle with the legislature and the decree also announced the creation of a new presidential working group on the constitution.

Mr. Yeltsin unveiled his draft constitution, built around a strong presidency, on April 29 when he told regional officials gathered at the Kremlin to take it back to their constituencies for study and to return with suggested changes.

Wednesday's decree said the work of the Constituent Assembly would be carried out "taking into account" modifications recommended by regional governments, organs of state power, political parties and movements, trade unions and Russian citizens.

The parliament meanwhile was preparing its own rival draft constitution which favours a largely figurehead presidency and a parliamentary republic.

Representatives of the parliament, including Deputy Speaker Nikolai Ryabov, were however also taking part in the sessions at the Kremlin on Mr. Yeltsin's draft constitution.

U.N. urges N. Korea to rejoin NPT

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council overwhelmingly urged North Korea Tuesday to reconsider its announced withdrawal from a nuclear treaty and to permit unfettered international inspections of its military sites.

The 15-member Council voted 13-0, with abstentions by China and Pakistan, to call on North Korea to reconsider its announced withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

It also called on the Pyongyang government to permit inspections banned by North Korea.

It called for consultations to resolve the standoff, but did not call for sanctions against North Korea for backing out of the treaty and for opposing U.N. inspections.

North Korea's withdrawal from the treaty takes effect June 12. The treaty provides for withdrawal by any member because of grave circumstances.

China has announced its intention to join the treaty, but Pakistan has not signed.

North Korea had argued for a delay in the meeting and had sought a full-dress session in which a senior government official would address the Council. But the Council refused to wait.

North Korean Ambassador Pak Gil Yon repudiated the legally binding but mild resolution, saying it would undermine peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and would not help resolve the disagreement.

Meanwhile, North Korea scorned U.N. Security Council pressure for it to allow inspections of its nuclear facilities, reports said Wednesday, as South Korea warned that economic sanctions might be applied if Pyongyang remained defiant.

North Korean President Kim Il-Sung warned that U.S.-led pressures for his country to open its nuclear facilities to international inspection would meet with a "counterforce from our people," an official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) report monitored here and in Tokyo said.

He was speaking at a reception for Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe in Pyongyang shortly before the U.N. Security Council adopted the resolution urging Pyongyang to reverse its March 12 decision to withdraw from the NPT.

South Korean Foreign Minister Haw Sung-Joo meanwhile told reporters here Wednesday the "resolution provides North Korea with an opportunity to peacefully settle the issue."

"But this is also a warning towards North Korea that supplementary measures could be taken," he said, referring to a second U.N. resolution urging sanctions likely to be voted on before North Korea's withdrawal from NPT takes effect on June 12.

Mr. Han noted as "very significant" that China, North Korea's sole remaining communist mentor, chose to abstain instead of using its veto as one of the council's five permanent members to block Tuesday's resolution.

Winnie Mandela targeted in death plot

JOHANNESBURG (R) — A Johannesburg newspaper said Wednesday a rightwing plot to assassinate black South African leaders included the killing of Winnie Mandela, estranged wife of ANC Chairman Nelson Mandela.

The Star newspaper, which Tuesday reported a plot to kill white Communist Party chairman and African National Congress leader Joe Slovo, said ANC Youth League President Peter Mokaba was also a target.

The latest revelations came as three white rightwingers appeared in Boksburg Magistrate's Court in connection with the April 10 murder of Communist Party Secretary-General Chris Hani.

Polish immigrant Janusz Walus, rightwing politician Clive Derby-Lewis and his Australian-born wife Gaye were remanded

in custody until May 21 without formal charges being laid in court.

Clive Derby-Lewis told reporters as he left the dock: "I am well."

A dozen rightwing supporters in the court gallery called "good luck" and leaned over to shake the hands of the accused.

The Citizen newspaper, meanwhile, said a man claiming to represent a black guerrilla group had threatened to kill White Wolves leader Barend Strydom, an ultra-rightwing convicted mass murderer freed from prison last year under a government amnesty.

The Citizen said the caller claimed to represent the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), guerrilla wing of the radical black Pan Africanist Congress.

He identified himself as Lacko Zimiri, deputy commander in chief of APLA, and threatened to kill Mr. Strydom with a bomb.

Mr. Strydom's father, Nic, was in the Boksburg court for the Wednesday hearing. The court was under heavy police and army guard and police relieved Mr. Strydom of a 9 mm pistol before allowing him into the building.

Meanwhile, at least seven blacks including two policemen have been killed around South Africa's volatile Natal province since Monday night, police said.

They said a detective was ambushed on his way to work Wednesday morning by gunmen wielding AK-47 assault rifles in Lamontville, south of Durban. A police constable was gunned down in Umhlang township near Durban Tuesday and a woman was then shot dead there Wednesday.

Locked doors condemned Bangkok fire victims to death

BANGKOK (AFP) — Survivors of Bangkok's fire disaster in which more than 200 perished said Wednesday they were held up by locked doors and security guards as they tried to flee.

And Assistant Police Chief Chalerm Rojanapradit charged there were no designated fire exit and no fire alarms or fire escapes at the doll factory.

He said there was a company policy that no worker was allowed to leave the premises without first submitting to a body search by guards.

Mr. Chalerm told reporters that managers and foremen at the plant apparently misread the situation and prevented hundreds of frantic workers from fleeing the burning building during the first critical minutes after the fire was reported.

"The security guards had a standing order not to let workers leave the factory without a body search for fear that they would steal materials and other valuables," Mr. Chalerm said.

He said the workers had never had a fire drill.

Mr. Chalerm earlier said his initial investigation showed the factory buildings were "obviously substandard."

"has never been any fire drill since I joined the company" two years ago. "They only taught some of us how to use a fire extinguisher."

Other employees said doors to the string of bridges linking the four buildings in the complex were routinely kept locked, and security guards had prevented them from using the bridges to escape the fire.

Survivors told reporters flames engulfed the factory quickly, the lights soon went out leaving the terrified employees in darkness, and the main building crumbled like "a house of cards" about 10 minutes after the fire began.

A spokeswoman for the Interior Ministry's Labour Protection and Welfare Department said Tuesday that the factory did not have a satisfactory emergency escape system.

"It was completely insufficient for a factory employing thousands," she said. "And much the same situation prevails in thousands of other factories in Thailand."

Some 4,000 employees, most of them women, were on the premises at the time, and officials said that the death toll could rise dramatically as workers dig deeper into the rubble.

Authorities continued interrogating plant managers Wednesday but no arrests were reported.

Meanwhile Thai police said that the nation's worst fire may have been caused by negligence or arson, as weary rescue workers and soldiers continued to pick through the rubble of the ravaged factory for more bodies.

Sobbing relatives crowded Bangkok police hospital to identify the bodies of the more than 200 victims, many of which were laid outside the autopsy unit because of the great number.

Searchers sweltering in 38-degree Celsius (100-degree Fahrenheit) heat worked throughout the day with cranes, sledgehammers and power saws. But no more bodies were recovered from the massive piles of debris.

There was confusion over the death toll, which Interior Ministry officials said remained at 240 and a coordination centre set up at the scene said was 209. Officials earlier said at least 547 people were also injured in the inferno, and many remained in serious condition.

Investigators, meanwhile, began focusing on the cause of Monday's tragedy at the Kader Industrial (Thailand) doll factory,

dubbed a "pit of hell" by the Bangkok Post newspaper.

Police told AFP it now appeared the fire was not started by an electrical short circuit as first thought, and that investigators were looking at the possibility that carelessness or arson caused the blaze.

Major General Pakorn Sudparit, head of the Office of Scientific Crime, quoted a witness as saying the fire started in a store room. Gen. Pakorn said he had investigated the area and found no evidence of a short circuit.

Local managers of the plant on Bangkok's western fringe insisted it had met Thai standards.

"Our system has regularly examined by state agencies, including the departments of industrial works and labour," Pichet Laokasem, the plant's deputy managing director, told reporters.

He said the company was being monitored by Thai authorities because of two previous blazes, and had held fire escape drills once a month.

"The last exercise was held late on April," Mr. Pichet said.

Sprinklers were installed in every building, he added, but acknowledged there were no designated fire exits.

Rescue workers Tuesday carrying a body through dismembered toys strewn around the Bangkok factory which burnt to the ground (AFP photo)

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Carlo Azeglio Ciampi

Ciampi wins Senate confidence vote

ROME (Agencies) — The Italian Senate passed a vote of confidence Wednesday in the new government of Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, giving the stamp of approval to his plans to implement historic political reforms.

The lower house of parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, approved the new government's programme in a vote Friday in which former Communists and other key parties without ministers in the Ciampi cabinet abstained.

The Senate vote was 162 in favour of the government, 26 opposed and 50 abstentions. Only 245 of the 326 senators were present for the ballot.

As in the chamber vote, senators from the four parties present in Mr. Ciampi's 12-day-old coalition, the Christian Democrats, Socialists, Social Democrats and Liberals backed the government.

The former communists of the Democratic Party of the Left, the centrist Republicans, Greens and the federalist Northern League abstained while the neo-fascist MSI and the hardline Communist Refoundation Party voted against Mr. Ciampi.

Mr. Ciampi has said his government's top priorities would be to implement electoral reforms approved by an overwhelming majority in a referendum last month and to overcome the vast political corruption scandal which has ravaged Italy's political establishment.

Meanwhile Milan magistrates Wednesday detained Franco Nobili, the head of Italy's biggest state company and the most senior business leader to be arrested in a 15-month corruption investigation.

Mr. Nobili, 67-year-old chairman of the Istituto Per La Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI), Europe's second largest company, was arrested in Rome and taken to Milan's San Vittore Prison, judicial sources said.

Mr. Nobili, who took over as IRI chief in 1989, is accused of corruption and breaking the law on the financing of political parties.

The sources said the accusations stemmed from 11 years he spent at Cogefar, one of Italy's largest construction firms, before joining IRI. They relate to bribes allegedly paid to State Electricity Company (ENEL).

In San Vittore, Mr. Nobili joins the ex-head of state energy firm ENI, Gabriele Cagliari, held for two months on similar charges.

Mr. Cagliari, who resigned as chief of Italy's second largest state corporation after his arrest, has admitted the group paid about 26 billion lire (\$17 million) in kickbacks to the country's main political parties.

Judicial sources said the magistrates believed Mr. Cagliari had more to tell.

In a separate development, former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, facing charges of collusion with the mafia, is due to appear before the full Senate Thursday, which will decide whether to lift his parliamentary immunity.

The vote by the 326 senators will be a test of deputies' willingness to allow Italian magistrates to investigate the affairs of politicians implicated in corruption scandals.

More than 150 deputies out of 956 elected to both chambers are currently under investigation.

Mr. Andreotti himself asked for his immunity to be lifted, after failing three times to convince the ad hoc parliamentary commission considering lifting his immunity that there was "no evidence" he has mafia links.

Mr. Andreotti has described the various charges against him, grouped under the general term of "links with mafia criminals," as "slanderous," and now hopes to give his own account before the judges.

Several mafia informers have formally accused Mr. Andreotti of various types of collusion with the mafia beginning minor interference with case files and contacts with mafia bosses in Sicily.

Sports

Becker, Courier advance

ROME (AFP) — Fancy footwork couldn't save world No. 7 Ivan Lendl from one of his worst defeats on clay at the Italian Open Tuesday.

Lendl, the fifth seed succumbed 6-2, 6-1 to Uruguayan clay-court specialist Marcelo Filippini in the first round and left the court to the sound of whistles from the disappointed fans.

But Boris Becker brought his weight around well enough to emerge with a victory on the fast new surface.

For years, players have complained that the clay on the Foro Italico courts is just too slow compared to Roland Garros, site of the French Open.

This year, the organisers have taken them at their word and speeded up the surface considerably with new clay, adding lighter balls to the tournament for good measure.

"You never get used to a loss in any round but after 15 years of tennis you learn to live with it," said Lendl, who only a fortnight ago sparked talk of a renaissance with his win in Munich the week after he made the final in Nice.

"It was very slippery and I could not keep my feet. Every time I would run one direction I would slide for several metres and could not get back in time for the next shot," he complained.

Filippini's precise strokes made a mockery of Lendl's comeback plans as the 25-year-old South American, ranked 67th in the world, broke his serve almost at will.

Becker, who has never done well on clay, got along fine on the surface in his 6-4, 6-3 victory over Andrei Cherkasov of Russia.

"I'm heavier than Ivan so I don't slide as quickly as him," he joked. "It was not too slippery for me."

Jim Courier, still trying to adjust to life as world number two under Pete Sampras, was satisfied after ousting qualifier Horacio de La Pena of Argentina 6-2, 6-1.

Graf blasts Labat off court: Steffi Graf took just 43 minutes to overwhelm Florentia Labat 6-2, 6-2 and reach the third round of the German Open Tuesday.

"Was that a match? she asked afterwards. "It went so quickly. Whatever I tried was so easy and she made a lot of mistakes."

The Argentinian left-hander, ranked 45th in the world, barely raised a challenge. Her normally strong forehand was not in evidence and she often put little weight behind the ball.



Uruguay's Marcelo Filippini returns a shot to opponent Ivan Lendl whom he beat 6-2, 6-1 at the Italian Open (AFP photo)

Ninth seed Kimiko Date fell to the big serving of Brenda Schultz, losing 6-4, 6-2.

Natalia Zvereva, seeded 12, was beaten by American Ann Grossman. The Belarussian led 5-2 but then lost the next 11 games in a remarkable collapse to lose 7-5, 6-0.

Jordan fed Scottie Pippen for a dunk, then scored Chicago's next six points as the Bulls widened the lead to 79-70 with 5:52 to go.

Jordan added four free throws and Scott Williams scored four points as the Cavaliers got no closer than five points the rest of the way.

Jordan was 16-for-30 from the field and made all 11 of his free throws.

Jordan said he was sparked by Gerald Wilkins' claim to be the best defender against him in the league.

Gerald is a great defensive player. He's a competitor," Jordan said. "I respect that."

He added: "But it's a challenge for me, also."

Scottie Pippen, who along with Jordan was named to the NBA all-defensive team earlier in the day, scored just nine points for the Bulls.

Another Chicago "loophole" Jordan had to fill was the loss of starter Horace Grant, who twisted his ankle and played only 19 minutes, scoring six points but grabbing seven rebounds.

In Phoenix, every time it seemed the Suns were pulling away for good, the Spurs came back.

The Suns led by as many as 18 points midway through the third quarter at 62-44 but the Spurs rallied to close within nine at the end of the period, 75-66.

Phoenix went on a 6-0 run to open the fourth quarter to take a 15-point advantage at 81-66.

Bulls, Suns score wins

CHICAGO (R) — Michael Jordan filled the basket and all the "loopholes" Tuesday, showing once again why he is the undisputed leader of the two-time defending champion Chicago Bulls and the best player in the NBA.

Jordan scored 16 of his 43 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Bulls to a 91-69 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers in the opener of their best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinal series.

"As a leader you have to step in and cover the loopholes," Jordan said.

In the night's other game, Kevin Johnson scored 25 points and Richard Dumas added 22 as the Phoenix Suns held off the San Antonio Spurs 98-89 in game one of their best-of-seven Western Conference semifinals.

Meanwhile the Seattle SuperSonics drew first blood in their best-of-seven Western Conference semifinal with a 99-90 game one victory over the Houston Rockets.

Jordan, whose playoff average against the Cavaliers is nearly 39 points per game, kept the Bulls in the game with 19 first-half points, then took over in the fourth quarter.

He opened the period with a jumper and layup to give Chicago a 68-63 lead. Stacey King's three-point play gave the Bulls a 71-66 lead with 9:39 remaining.

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Jordan's Al Ahli

Al Maidan Basketball Tournament Jordan's Al Ahli consolidate lead with 91-69 victory

By Aileen Bannayan Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Surprising results and tough competition is what Al Maidan's Basketball Tournament has provided over the past few days despite the small number of fans following up the matches at the Sports Palace at Al Hussein Youth City.

The competition, held on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of constitutional powers, has drawn seven Arab teams from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

Judging by the results of the 14 matches the teams have played so far, one would have a difficult set of possibilities as to who the eventual champion will be, especially since there are still some tough matches ahead for the teams vying for the title or an advanced standing.

In the latest matches Wednesday, Iraq's Al Naft upset Lebanon's Al Hikma 92-89. The first half ended 45-42 for Al Hikma who had won all their matches and clearly had the title in mind.

In the other match of the day Al Ahli continued their unbeaten streak and scored another victory of 91-69 over the Iraqi Air Force team.

The two teams from Iraq, which boast experienced players like Nasser Ahmad, Qusai Hatem and Thamer Mustafa, all well-known to Jordanian fans, fought it out in the only match that went into overtime, after the second half ended 93-93. Al Naft managed to win the match 107-104.

In another match Jordan's Al Ahli scored an impressive 93-75 win over Lebanon's Al Riyadi in a match in which Al Ahli's players demonstrated a quality of play new to Jordanian basketball.

Their fast and agile play and accurate three-pointers by Marwan Ma'touq, Sameer Marqus, Yousef Zaghloul and Naser Bushnaq in addition to efforts by rising star Walid Badraq enabled Al Ahli to secure a most precious win over Al Riyadi who had earlier overcome Iraq's Al Naft 111-99.

In other matches Lebanon's Al Hikma upset Jordan's 1992 champions Al Orthodoxy 92-81, while Al Ahli managed a 1-point 77-76 win over Al Naft.

Upcoming matches which will display the tough fight for the title include the clash of Al Orthodoxy-Al Naft, Al Ahli-Al Hikma, Al Riyadi-Iraqi Air Force and the much awaited battle of Jordan's all-time rivals Al Orthodoxy and Al Ahli Friday.

Standings prior to Wednesday's matches

	P	W	L	GF	SA	Pts
Al Ahli	3	3	—	385	281	6
Al Hikma	3	3	—	261	211	6
Al Riyadi	4	2	2	347	325	6
Al Orthodoxy	3	2	1	277	257	5
Iraqi Air Force	4	1	3	366	351	5
Al Naft	3	1	2	282	292	4
Al Qads	4	—	4	297	488	4

In another match Jordan's Al Ahli scored an

Sheep to be evicted from Wembley of the Middle East

BEIRUT (AFP) — Having hosted World Cup soccer, Lebanese leaders now plan the eviction of 1,000 sheep and a refugee shanty town from what was once the Wembley of the Middle East.

To prepare for the Pan-Arab Games that Lebanon will stage in 1996, the government has committed itself to renovating the Cite Sportive complex from its desolate state.

The \$80 million reconstruction will rid the stadium of many of its war ghosts. It will also be severe test of the organisational ability of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

The premier put his weight behind the project while welcoming India, Hong Kong and South Korea to the World Cup qualifying tournament, Beirut's first post-war international sports event.

Built for the 1957 Pan-Arab Games, the 65,000 capacity Cite Sportive was the biggest and grandest stadium in the Middle East. Lebanese were proud to sit there just to look at the region's first electronic scoreboard and clock.

But the Cite Sportive was an early victim of conflict. The last Lebanese championship games were played there the day war broke out on April 13, 1975.

Set in the Muslim suburb of Bir Hassam, the stadium became an arms depot for Palestinian forces based in the adjoining Sabra camp.

It was bombed for two days by Israeli planes before their 1982 invasion.

The barrage was so fierce the concrete upper terraces were left hanging precariously by their metal supports. They still do.

Already used as a prison during a 1961 coup d'etat, the Israelis also used it to keep Palestinian prisoners.

For almost 20 years, Lebanese soccer went underground. Gatherings of the national squad were organisational nightmares. Players from the Christian sector had to take a boat to Nicosia and another back to the Muslim side where they used assumed identities.

All internationals were held abroad. Now the Cite Sportive pitch is home to more than 2,500 Lebanese who lost their homes in the war, Palestinian, Kurd and other refugees, and their goats. The only football played is by children outside their makeshift huts.

In the car park, Berkhetan Assaf and his family graze their huge flock of sheep. "It's the best ground we have ever been on," he said. The basketball arena, once a regular fixture for the touring Harlem Globetrotters, has been turned into the Beirut meat market. Another adjoining gymnasium is for flowers and vegetables.

Lebanon's sporting leaders had been waiting years for Hariri's announcement, when opening the Asian qualifying tournament for the World Cup, that "work will start soon" on the new Cite Sportive.

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English Premier League

Final Standings

LONDON (AFP) — Final English Premier League table after Tuesday's games in which Tottenham beat Arsenal 3-1 and Queen's Park Rangers beat Sheffield Wednesday 3-1.

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Manchester United	42	24	12	6	67	31	84
Aston Villa	42	21	11	10	56	40	74
Norwich	42	21	9	12	61	65	72
Blackburn	42	20	11	11	68	46	71
Queen's Park Rangers	42	17	12	13	63	55	63
Liverpool	42	16	11	15	62	55	59
Sheffield Wednesday	42	15	14	13	55	51	59
Tottenham	42	16	11	15	60	66	59
Manchester City	42	15	12	15	56	51	57
Arsenal	42	15	11	16	40	38	56
Chelsea	42	14	14	14	51	54	56
Wimbledon	42	14	12	16	56	55	54
Everton	42	15	8	19	53	55	53
Sheffield United	42	14	10	18	54	53	52
Coventry	42	13	13	16	52	57	52
Ipswich	42	12	16	14	50	55	52
Leeds	42	12	15	15	57	62	51
Southampton	42	12	11	18	54	61	50
Oldham	42	13	10	19	63	74	49
Crystal Palace*	42	13	16	13	48	62	49
Middlesbrough*	42	11	11	20	54	61	44
Nottingham Forest*	42	11	10	22	41	75	40

★ Relegated

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A108752 ♠AKJ3 ♣7 ♠65
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
What do you bid now?

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠6 ♠AK6 ♠AQ8 ♠AQ842
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
3 ♠ Pass Pass ?
What action do you take?

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠852 ♠AJ5 ♠AKJ83 ♠72
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?

Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AQ765 ♠Q102 ♠83 ♠952
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 ♣ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♣ Pass ?
What do you bid now?

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q7642 ♠A ♠A985 ♠A98
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
?
What do you bid now?

Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KJ109 ♠73 ♠AJ1076 ♠K986
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ 1 ♣ 1 ♠ ?
What action do you take?

South Korea defeat Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Hong Kong beat India 2-1 in Beirut Tuesday, buttressing its lead in Asia Group D qualifying round for the 1994 World Soccer Cup. South Korea moved into second place, defeating Lebanon 1-0.

Striker Loh Wai-Chi put Hong Kong in the lead 15 minutes into the first half, blasting a 20-year kick into the net of Indian goalkeeper Mohammad Yousef.

The Indians turned on the heat through the rest of the first half, but Hong Kong goalkeeper Chang Hing-Wing made four spectacular saves that brought stupendous cheers from the stands, packed with 15,000 spectators.

Nine minutes into the second half, Indian forward Vijayan Mani headed in the equalizer from a long outside throw by Francisco Silveira. Mani's goal came only four minutes after he received a yellow card from Pakistani referee Kassi Assaf.

Striker Lee Kin-We scored the winning goal for Hong Kong in the 57th minute.

Forward Ha Seok-Ju scored South Korea's sole goal in the 17th minute of the day's second match with Lebanon.

The Lebanese, playing in an international soccer tournament for the first time after 15 years of civil war, dominated the first half, but faltered in the South Korean penalty area.

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Karadzic sees Serb 'no' on peace plan

PALE, Bosnia (Agencies) — Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic Wednesday predicted his people would vote "no" this weekend in a referendum on an international peace plan for Bosnia.

Mr. Karadzic confirmed he and members of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb assembly would not be attending a meeting of Yugoslav, Serbian and Montenegrin legislators due to be held on Friday in Belgrade.

The Belgrade meeting is intended to preempt the referendum on the plan, drawn up by mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen.

Mr. Karadzic said he expected the result of the referendum would be known next Wednesday.

Only after that could the Bosnian Serb assembly decide whether to attend a pan-Serbian parliamentary meeting proposed by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Explaining why Bosnian Serbs would reject the Vance-Owen plan, Mr. Karadzic told reporters:

"The people living here have established their own state and they don't expect half of them to live under Muslim or Croat domination and another half to live in a kind of Nagorno-Karabakh. He wants to be linked, that is how we feel our safety."

Nagorno-Karabakh is an Armenian-populated enclave in Azerbaijan, and has seen some of the fiercest ethnic-based fighting in the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Karadzic said the Bosnian Serbs had already been accused of delay tactics on the Vance-Owen plan and could not delay the referendum any longer.

"The people have to decide, the people who have paid a high price in this fight for freedom," he said.

Mr. Milosevic, who has put much pressure on the Bosnian Serbs to join the Bosnian Muslims and Croats in signing the peace plan, said the decision was too important to be left to the Bosnian Serbs alone.

"Mr. Milosevic never influenced the Serbian people here. That is an illusion of the West," Mr. Karadzic said.

Heavy street fighting wracked the southwestern city of Mostar Wednesday despite attempts by a U.N. commander to broker a new cease-fire between Bosnian Croats and Muslim-led army troops.

Much of the eastern, Muslim-held section of the city was in flames as Croat forces battled to

break a Muslim foothold on the west side of the Neretva River, which Bosnian Croats want as their eastern-most boundary.

Vesko Vego, a spokesman for the Croat forces, said five soldiers were killed and about 50 wounded since Tuesday afternoon. A colleague said dozens of Muslim wounded were hospitalised on the Croat side.

In eastern Bosnia, Canadian peacekeepers came under fire in the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica Tuesday, said U.N. spokesman Barry Frewer in Sarajevo. A Canadian corporal was wounded.

Srebrenica was declared a demilitarised zone last month but "we are seeing continued uneasiness in the area," Mr. Frewer said.

In nearby Zepa, civilians began returning from the hills where they had fled a Serb assault last week, after Ukrainian peacekeepers arrived to begin demilitarising the area.

The U.N. was to begin evacuating about 200 wounded from Zepa, one of six "safe areas" declared by the U.N. Security Council last week.

At U.N. headquarters, Bosnia's Muslim-led government asked the United Nations to withdraw its 9,000 peacekeepers and aid workers in order to clear the way for lifting the U.N. arms embargo. The Security Council planned to discuss Bosnia later Wednesday, but is unlikely to go along with the request.

U.S. President Bill Clinton said Wednesday the United States cannot ignore the bloody Yugoslav civil war for fear of getting caught in another Vietnam. He predicted new allied steps in the coming days will "make peace more likely."

Although Mr. Clinton said no final decision has been made, it appears increasingly likely the steps will include sending a small contingent of American troops to join United Nations forces in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, a symbolic deployment designed to stop the fighting from spreading.

"It is in the United States' national interest to keep this conflict from spilling over into a lot of other countries, which could drag the United States into something with NATO that we don't want," Mr. Clinton said in a morning radio interview.

Mr. Clinton has been frustrated by the refusal of European allies to endorse his calls for lifting the arms embargo against Bosnian Muslims and possible air strikes against Bosnian Serb targets.



Mounted tribesmen escort His Majesty upon his arrival in New Shuneh Wednesday (photo by Yousef Al 'Alwan)

New Shuneh extends rousing welcome to King Hussein

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

NEW SHUNEH, the Jordan Valley — Wednesday was a day of festivity and celebration for the residents of this small town on the main road from Amman to the bridge across the River Jordan as His Majesty King Hussein was their guest of honour for lunch.

It was also an occasion for the bedouin tribes of the Jordan Valley to extend a resounding reaffirmation of their loyalty to the Hashemite leadership and pledge to continue their contribution to nation-building.

The jubilation and happiness of the people of New Shuneh to receive the King appeared to have been best summarised by an elderly tribesman who described a slight drizzle during a welcoming ceremony for the monarch as "the tears of joy of our skies to have His Majesty among us."

At least 3,000 people, the bulk of them from the dominant Adwan tribe in North Shuneh, gathered under makeshift tents in the farm-grounds of Sami Affash Al Adwan, the mayor of New Shuneh and leader of the Adwans, one of the largest tribes in Jordan.

As the invited guests waited

inside, listening to national music and songs in praise of King Hussein, an equal number crowded outside to have a glimpse of the King.

Sixteen Arab stallions carrying tribesmen dressed in their typical robes and singing songs offered a traditional escort to the monarch riding on the roof of his car to the ceremony ground from a purpose-built helipad a few hundred metres away where he had landed to the cheers of the crowd.

Delivering brief speeches — interspersed with hails to the monarch — to welcome the King and pledge continued loyalty to the Hashemite throne were Mayor Adwan and representatives of Jordan Valley farmers and the youth of the Adwan tribe.

The speeches also included expressions of deep gratitude to the King and the government for their help to the farmers in times of crisis and appeals for continued assistance.

The King, who was accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Cabinet and Par-

liament members, Royal Court officials, heads and senior officers of the armed forces and security departments, and the guests were treated to lunch by Mr. Adwan, a brother of Mohammad Al Adwan, chief of Royal Protocol.

In an emotional speech, the King later told the crowd: "As long as I live I will not forget this occasion of meeting you — members of our one family — and the love and affection you have for me..."

"I pray to God to help us protect this land which our grandfathers and fathers protected and to keep our heads raised high, unbowed to none but God," he said.

"May God safeguard our relationship and help us continue on our path towards serving the interests of the nation," said the King.

"Let us perform our duties so that the next generations will say that we had done our best," he said. "We are all citizens and soldiers of the nation..."

Addressing the appeals of the residents of the Jordan Valley, the King promised to "do the best I can to fulfill your demands and resolve your problems" and called on them "to shoulder their responsibilities and perform their duties."

U.N. mission reports Israel's abuse of rights

GENEVA (R) — A U.N. team has said that Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories are still being killed and tortured since a more moderate Labour government took over from the right-wing nationalist Likud administration.

A U.N. investigative committee urged Israel to take concrete steps to improve the human rights situation in the occupied territories as a key to concluding the recently-resumed Middle East peace talks.

Reporting on a two-week mission to the region — though it was barred from visiting the occupied territories — the committee issued a communique which also expressed concern about the nearly 400 Palestinians expelled last December and still in southern Lebanon.

"The special committee was repeatedly informed about the harsh measures used by the Israeli authorities to repress opposition to, and the uprising against, the occupation," a spokesman said.

The committee, which reports to the U.N. General Assembly, completed its hearings in Syria,

Jordan and Egypt on May 8. As in previous years, Israel denied it access to the occupied territories.

The committee, which based its findings on reports in the Israeli press as well as on oral evidence, was led by Stanley Kaipage, Sri Lanka's ambassador to the United Nations.

The communique said: "The testimony concerning human rights violations suffered by the witnesses, their relatives, friends or neighbours as well as on the living conditions prevailing in the territories, confirmed reports that the special committee had received about the persistence of serious human rights violations since the taking of office of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government."

Mr. Rabin took over the Israeli government last June after a crushing electoral defeat of Mr. Shamir's Likud administration, the most right-wing in the country's history.

The committee cited concern about the "high number of deaths and serious injuries inflicted upon the civilian population, especially minors," and "unjust methods of house demolition."

Saudi theologians assail rights group

RIYADH (AP) — The chief Muslim theological body of Saudi Arabia Wednesday castigated scholars and lawyers who recently set up a human-rights commission in the kingdom.

A statement by the 20-member supreme council of ulama said the group was illegal.

Expressing "surprise at the behaviour of those brethren who set themselves up as defenders of legitimate rights in Saudi Arabia," the council said its members "unanimously agreed on the illegality of the commission or its recognition."

The council said Saudis knew they could have recourse to courts ruled by Islamic law, "no-one is prevented from presenting grievances to concerned parties in these courts or the Diwan Al Mazalim (grievances court)."

"The signatories of that declaration know all this full well, as they know what confusing ramifications it can have," the statement added.

The council is chaired by Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz.

The statement was signed by 19 of the 20 members. Council sources said the missing signature belonged to an elderly theologian who was in hospital for treatment.

The six men who announced the formation of the commission are led by Abdullah Ben Sulaiman Al Mas'ari, a retired judge of the grievances court, which receives petitions from individuals against the state.

Their "declaration of the establishment of the commission for the defence of legitimate rights," distributed last week, carried their names and addresses in Saudi Arabia to be contacted by "whoever wishes to report an injustice to us or communicate authentic information that help eliminate injustice, support the oppressed and defend legitimate rights."

It said the commission was set up because Sharia "made it incumbent upon the Muslims to support the oppressed and to eliminate injustices."

Yemen opposition frets over ruling parties' merger

DUBAI (R) — Yemen's opposition groups are worried that a merger of the former ruling parties of North and South Yemen would leave them out in the cold but diplomats say President Ali Abdullah Saleh is keen to bring them into his new government.

The merger will give the former ruling parties an absolute majority in the newly-elected parliament.

A spokesman for the main opposition group, the Islamist Yemen Gathering for Reform (YGR) which won at least 52 seats in the April 27 election, said the party had not yet decided how to react.

"There is no decision yet. There are discussions," he said.

Diplomats in the capital Sanaa said the YGR and other smaller opposition groups saw the merger as a conspiracy to rob them of any major influence in parliament, due to hold its first session Saturday.

But despite their worries, the main opposition groups were keeping a low profile for now in the hope of securing government seats, the diplomats said.

The merger agreement said vice president, Ali Salem Al Baidh, who heads the formerly Marxist Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) will be vice-president.

The conservative GPC, which ruled the former North Yemen, emerged as the largest single party from the election, the first since Yemen united in 1990.

Results have yet to be finalised because of complaints about irregularities in some constituencies and because some legislators elected as independents have joined one or other of the parties.

But even if the disputed seats and their independent followers are not counted the two parties could muster an absolute majority of at least 164 of the 301-seats in parliament.

Bush is not worth the explosives — Iraqi aide

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said Wednesday it would not waste explosives on killing former U.S. President George Bush who was already politically dead, denying allegations of an Iraqi plot to assassinate the country's arch-enemy.

Mr. Bush "killed himself when he led the aggression against Iraq," said Abdul Jabbar Mohsen, press adviser to President Saddam Hussein, in an article published by Al Iraq newspaper.

He argued that Mr. Bush lost the November election because of the 1991 Gulf war, which evicted Iraq from Kuwait, and was since politically dead.

The former president "does not deserve us to sacrifice a few kilograms of explosives," said Mr. Mohsen. Iraq "is not the kind to assassinate the dead and commit profanity against corpses."

He said Kuwaiti allegations of an Iraqi plot to kill Mr. Bush in a car bomb attack were fabricated to sabotage Baghdad's efforts at economic recovery and as propaganda that Iraq still posed a

threat to Kuwait.

A Senior U.S. Administration official said Saturday there was "credible intelligence" that the Iraqi government was involved in the plot, Kuwait said it was uncovered by Kuwaiti authorities during Mr. Bush's April 14-16 visit to the emirate.

Mr. Mohsen said he believed the accusations were aimed at fabricating a crisis to keep in place U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Kuwait Monday charged 16 suspects including alleged Iraqi agents with trying to assassinate Mr. Bush.

It said the gang, led by an Iraqi intelligence colonel, planned to kill Mr. Bush using a car bomb or suicide bomber.

Iraq had expressed hopes that it could improve relations with Washington under the administration of President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Mohsen wrote an open letter to Mr. Clinton shortly before his inauguration calling on him to abandon the policies of his predecessor and open a dialogue with Iraq.

Jordan ponders path to future

(Continued from page 1)

Stagnation on either level could only have a negative, maybe even detrimental, effect on Jordan's budding democracy and, ultimately, stability. The next parliamentary elections, scheduled for around November this year, could strengthen the hands of those who oppose the peace process and the IMF-World Bank programme, mainly the hard-line Islamists.

Jordan could find itself in a bind if either the anti-peace groups attain a majority in the next parliament or the widely acclaimed policy of peaceful containment of the "fundamentalist threat" eventually fails the test.

The regime is not saying much about how it intends to play its cards in a clean democratic game and at the same time ensure security and continuity of moderate policies in the regional and international contexts.

Since the regime cannot depend on achieving breakthroughs in the unpredictable peace process, which would in turn strengthen the hand of the centrist candidates in the elections, Jordan has to look inward for panaceas.

The Kingdom currently operates under an elections law that could give hardliners, on both the left and right, the

edge they need to win a majority in the next parliament. The regime has the constitutional power to change the law into a one-man-one-vote system that would almost certainly curb the chances of the hardliners, especially the ultra conservative right. But whether it would do so and risk in the process drawing accusations of being "undemocratic" is a question that will not be answered for several weeks.

The King has just asked the Prime minister, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, to retain his present Cabinet, which is not likely to produce any electoral change, until the end of May, when a final decision on the issue has to be made. As Sharif Zeid's government was largely expected to resign soon after the celebrations to mark the King's 40th anniversary on the throne on May 2 were ended, however, the move was seen as the beginning of the last phase in the wait-and-see policy that Jordan has followed over the last few months.

Needless to say, this phase is going to be crucial for the ultimate decision that has to be taken on the need or the lack of it thereof for electoral reform. The choices are many, but there is only one that will have to be made in the end. On this choice will depend much of what happens in Jordan in the future.

Washington talks struggle ahead

(Continued from page 1)

An international meeting in Oslo on Middle East refugees heard a report Wednesday urging Israel to pay more attention to the reunification of Palestinian families forced to live apart, delegates said. The Palestinian issue dominated business on the second day of the closed-session talks.

The report covering the plight of families in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the occupied territories "found that Israel should pay more attention to the reunification of families," Mykola Cholombytko, head of the Ukrainian de-

legation, told Reuters. Delegates said the refugee talks, taking place in Oslo at the invitation of the Norwegian government and due to end on Thursday, had so far managed to avert the procedural wrangles which hampered an earlier round in Ottawa last November.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst, opening the talks on Tuesday, said: "Families have been separated and violated by the conflict in the Middle East. You must find ways of reuniting them or reconnecting the human bonds," he said.

The choices for electoral reform

(Continued from page 1)

the law among the majority of the country's political groups is not accompanied by a similar accord on the need for, or nature of, the change.

Proponents of the change base their argument on the major contention that the law is not conducive to fair representation of all sectors of society. Its opponents fear the repercussions of changing it on the stability of the country and question the workability of the vaguely defined offered alternatives.

The law divides Jordan into 20 constituencies based on administrative borders and assign each constituency a number of seats in the House that do not reflect the population concentration in each area.

This, opponents of the law say, is undemocratic because it does not guarantee equal representation for citizens.

For example, they say, the governorate of Zarqa, whose population is estimated at over half a million people, is given six seats, one of which is reserved for the Circassian and Chechen minority and another for Christians. On the other hand, Tafleeh, a governorate of about 70,000 people, has three seats in the Lower House. Accordingly, while roughly each 22,000 people in Tafleeh have one deputy, there is one representative for every 80,000 citizens in Zarqa, which is unfair, if not altogether unconstitutional, according to critics of the law.

To redress this situation, some proposals focus on dividing the country into 80 voting districts with equal allocations of seats to each area through increasing the number of the House members to allow for the representation of under-represented sectors of society.

Along with such proposals, critics of the law are demanding the introduction of one-man-one-vote system to ensure that voters have the same voting power in all districts of the Kingdom.

Under the current law, voters have as many votes as the number of deputies in their

districts, which means that a voter in the Fifth District of Amman, which has five seats, can cast five votes while a voter in the First District can vote for three candidates only.

A political analyst who opposes changing the law says that it will not be feasible for Jordan to redraft the voting districts for both practical and political reasons. On the practical level, he says, increasing the number of candidates to allow for an equal representation of all citizens in all districts would dramatically increase the number of Lower House members.

To illustrate this, one has to look at the numbers, he says. "If the number of seats for Amman is to be increased so as to ensure that Ammanites and people of Tafleeh have equal representation, the seats for Amman have to be increased to roughly 43 seats. If that is applied to the rest of the voting districts, the number of seats needed will be too high."

Dividing Jordan into 80 voting districts is also difficult to do due to the political repercussions such a move would generate. While it was easy to divide Irbid into five districts because the division was made along borders that historically existed among parts of the governorate (Ajloun, for example, is historically separated from Jerash and Ramtha), it will be difficult to do so in Tafleeh where no such divisions exist.

Voting districts in Tafleeh will have to be drawn in line with population concentration which will mean some tribes will be represented and others will not because tribes have traditionally peopled the same area.

"That," said one analyst, "will strengthen negative tribalism and would certainly have negative political consequences that could threaten harmony and stability in the Kingdom."

The current voting districts, said the highly-informed analyst who requested anonymity, also ensures geographic and demographic representation of all parts and sectors of the country.

COLUMN

Cezanne sale stuns art market

NEW YORK (R) — A Paul Cezanne still life of a bowl of apples stunned the art market selling for \$28.6 million at auction, the first painting to bring in over \$20 million in three years of disappointing sales. Works by Renoir, Braque and Matisse also sold well, bolstering the hopes of auction officials and art dealers that a three-year slump in the high end of the market was over. The Cezanne, which Sotheby's had estimated would sell for a mere \$10 million, was sold to an unidentified buyer after a heated battle between two telephone bidders that jumped in \$1 million increments. The price broke the Cezanne record of \$17.2 million for another still life and stunned the jam-packed gallery. "The Cezanne was a thrilling surprise," said Diana Brooks, president and chief executive officer at Sotheby's. The price fell far short of the world record price for a painting of \$82.5 million in 1990 for Vincent Van Gogh's Portrait of Dr. Gachet. Sotheby's officials were also pleased with the rest of the 56-lot sale, which totalled some \$76 million.

When guest don't show, hosts invite stray dogs

COLOMBO (AP) — Those lucky Sri Lankan dogs. When 40 adult guests didn't show for a ceremony honouring teenagers who helped build a crematorium, villagers grabbed stray dogs, covered them with garlands and fed them rice, curry and desserts. The teenagers, in the central village of Kottmale, were happy to share the days with the decked-out dogs; the Divina newspaper reported.

Teenager accused of stealing subway train

NEW YORK (R) — Police say he took the "A" train — for a ride. In a first in the annals of New York crime, a teenager has been arrested on suspicion of stealing a city subway train. Keron Thomas, 16, allegedly showed up at a Northern Manhattan depot in a transit authority uniform and with the handle and key required to move a train. Assigned a 10-car train on the "A" line — made famous by a Duke Ellington song — he got smoothly to the end of the line in Queens, a transit authority spokesman said. But coming back, he ran a red light, stopping the train.

Aborigines put curse on football official

SYDNEY (R) — Aborigines, incensed by comments by an Australian Rules Football official, put a curse on him but did not, as threatened, "point the bone" — a traditional death spell. Television cameras watched as an aborigine in Darwin, dressed in white body paint, jabbed a spear at the face of Collingwood Football Club President Allan McAlister during a reception, singing a song to bring him bad luck for a year. The curse followed Mr. McAlister's comment last month that aboriginal football players were acceptable in the sport as long as they behaved like whites.

Wisconsin crop circle called hoax

KENOSHA, Wisconsin (R) — A 35-foot (10-metre) ring in a farm field was caused by pranksters using weed killer in an area of Wisconsin where residents reported seeing unidentified flying objects last winter, police said. Ted Steele, whose house abuts the field, said he woke up to find the wheel-like design earlier this month after a night during which his wife and son heard strange noises. The ring consists of grass chopped off close to the ground and a dark brown inner circle that looks like a scorch mark, Steele said.

Nineties will be 'decade of fraud'

GENEVA (R) — The 1990s will be the decade of fraud worldwide, U.S. investigator Jules Kroll said. Mr. Kroll, known as Wall Street's "private eye" for his financial investigations, told the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce: "The 1990s will be the decade of fraud. This is not just true in the United States but also in places like Japan. We have just seen the surface of this in the European context." He said greater pressure on heavily indebted companies and less verification in speculator, cross-border financial transactions would cause the dramatic rise in fraud cases.